

# A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

*W.D. Howells.*

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# A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

A Novel

BY

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"MODERN ITALIAN POETS" ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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## A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES.



### PART FIRST.

#### I.

“Now, you think this thing over, March, and let me know the last of next week,” said Fulkerson. He got up from the chair which he had been sitting astride, with his face to its back, and tilting toward March on its hind-legs, and came and rapped upon his table with his thin bamboo stick. “What you want to do is to get out of the insurance business, anyway. You acknowledge that yourself. You never liked it, and now it makes you sick; in other words, it’s killing you. You ain’t an insurance man by nature. You’re a natural-born literary man; and you’ve been going against the grain. Now, I offer you a chance to go *with* the grain. I don’t say you’re going to make your everlasting fortune, but I’ll give you a living salary, and if the thing succeeds you’ll share in its success. We’ll all share in its success.” That’s the beauty of it. I tell you,

March, this is the greatest idea that has been struck since——” Fulkerson stopped and searched his mind for a fit image——“since the creation of man.”

He put his leg up over the corner of March’s table and gave himself a sharp cut on the thigh, and leaned forward to get the full effect of his words upon his listener.

March had his hands clasped together behind his head, and he took one of them down long enough to put his inkstand and mucilage-bottle out of Fulkerson’s way. After many years’ experiment of a moustache and whiskers, he now wore his grizzled beard full, but cropped close ; it gave him a certain grimness, corrected by the gentleness of his eyes.

“Some people don’t think much of the creation of man, nowadays. Why stop at that? Why not say since the morning stars sang together?”

“No, sir ; no, sir! I don’t want to claim too much, and I draw the line at the creation of man. I’m satisfied with that. But if you want to ring the morning stars into the prospectus, all right ; I won’t go back on you.”

“But I don’t understand why you’ve set your mind on *me*,” March said. “I haven’t had any magazine experience, you know that ; and I haven’t seriously attempted to do anything in literature since I was married. I gave up smoking and the Muse together. I suppose I could still manage a cigar, but I don’t believe I could——”

“Muse worth a cent.” Fulkerson took the thought out of his mouth and put it into his own

words. "I know. Well, I don't want you to. I don't care if you never write a line for the thing, though you needn't reject anything of yours, if it happens to be good, on that account. And I don't want much experience in my editor; rather not have it. You told me, didn't you, that you used to do some newspaper work before you settled down?"

"Yes; I thought my lines were permanently cast in those places once. It was more an accident than anything else that I got into the insurance business. I suppose I secretly hoped that if I made my living by something utterly different, I could come more freshly to literature proper in my leisure."

"I see; and you found the insurance business too many for you. Well, anyway, you've always had a hankering for the inkpots; and the fact that you first gave me the idea of this thing shows that you've done more or less thinking about magazines."

"Yes—less."

"Well, all right. Now don't you be troubled. I know what I want, generally speaking, and in this particular instance I want *you*. I might get a man of more experience, but I should probably get a man of more prejudice and self-conceit along with him, and a man with a following of the literary hangers-on that are sure to get round an editor sooner or later. I want to start fair; and I've found out in the syndicate business all the men that are worth having. But they know me, and they

don't know you, and that's where we shall have the pull on them. They won't be able to work the thing. Don't you be anxious about the experience. I've got experience enough of my own to run a dozen editors. What I want is an editor who has taste, and you've got it; and conscience, and you've got it; and horse-sense, and you've got that. And I like you because you're a Western man, and I'm another. I do cotton to a Western man when I find him off East here, holding his own with the best of 'em, and showing 'em that he's just as much civilised as they are. We both know what it is to have our bright home in the setting sun; heigh?"

"I think we Western men who've come East are apt to take ourselves a little too objectively, and to feel ourselves rather more representative than we need," March remarked.

Fulkerson was delighted. "You've hit it! We do! We are!"

"And as for holding my own, I'm not very proud of what I've done in that way; it's been very little to hold. But I know what you mean, Fulkerson, and I've felt the same thing myself; it warmed me toward you when we first met. I can't help suffusing a little to any man when I hear that he was born on the other side of the Alleghanies. It's perfectly stupid. I despise the same thing when I see it in Boston people."

Fulkerson pulled first one of his blond whiskers and then the other, and twisted the end of each into a point, which he left to untwine itself. He fixed

March with his little eyes, which had a curious innocence in their cunning, and tapped the desk immediately in front of him. "What I like about you is that you're broad in your sympathies. The first time I saw you, that night on the Quebec boat, I said to myself, 'There's a man I want to know. There's a human being.' I was a little afraid of Mrs. March and the children, but I felt at home with you—thoroughly domesticated—before I passed a word with you; and when you spoke first, and opened up with a joke over that fellow's tableful of light literature and Indian moccasins and birch-bark toy canoes and stereoscopic views, I knew that we were brothers—spiritual twins. I recognised the Western style of fun, and I thought, when you said you were from Boston, that it was some of the same. But I see now that it's being a cold fact, as far as the last fifteen or twenty years count, is just so much gain. You know both sections, and you can make this thing go, from ocean to ocean."

"We might ring that into the prospectus, too," March suggested, with a smile. "You might call the thing *From Sea to Sea*. By the way, what are you going to call it?"

"I haven't decided yet; that's one of the things I wanted to talk with you about. I *had* thought of *The Syndicate*; but it sounds kind of dry, and it don't seem to cover the ground exactly. I should like something that would express the co-operative character of the thing; but I don't know as I can get it."

"Might call it *The Mutual*."

"They'd think it was an insurance paper. No, that won't do. But Mutual comes pretty near the idea. If we could get something like that, it would pique curiosity; and then if we could get paragraphs afloat explaining that the contributors were to be paid according to the sales, it would be a first-rate ad."

He bent a wide, anxious, inquiring smile upon March, who suggested lazily, "You might call it *The Round-Robin*. That would express the central idea of irresponsibility. As I understand, everybody is to share the profits and be exempt from the losses. Or, if I'm wrong, and the reverse is true, you might call it *The Army of Martyrs*. Come, that sounds attractive, Fulkerson! Or what do you think of *The Fifth Wheel*? That would forestall the criticism that there are too many literary periodicals already. Or, if you want to put forward the idea of complete independence, you could call it *The Free Lance*; or——"

"Or *The Hog on Ice*—either stand up or fall down, you know," Fulkerson broke in coarsely. "But we'll leave the name of the magazine till we get the editor. I see the poison's beginning to work in you, March; and if I had time, I'd leave the result to time. But I haven't. I've got to know inside of the next week. To come down to business with you, March, I shan't start this thing unless I can get you to take hold of it."

He seemed to expect some acknowledgment, and

March said, "Well, that's very nice of you, Fulkerson."

"No, sir; no, sir! I've always liked you, and wanted you, ever since we met that first night. I had this thing inchoately in my mind then, when I was telling you about the newspaper syndicate business—beautiful vision of a lot of literary fellows breaking loose from the bondage of publishers, and playing it alone——"

"You might call it *The Lone Hand*; that would be attractive," March interrupted. "The whole West would know what you meant."

Fulkerson was talking seriously, and March was listening seriously; but they both broke off and laughed. Fulkerson got down off the table, and made some turns about the room. It was growing late; the October sun had left the top of the tall windows; it was still clear day, but it would soon be twilight; they had been talking a long time. Fulkerson came and stood with his little feet wide apart, and bent his little lean, square face on March: "See here! How much do you get out of this thing here, anyway?"

"The insurance business?" March hesitated a moment, and then said, with a certain effort of reserve, "At present about three thousand." He looked up at Fulkerson with a glance, as if he had a mind to enlarge upon the fact, and then dropped his eyes without saying more.

Whether Fulkerson had not thought it so much or not, he said, "Well, I'll give you thirty-five

hundred. Come! And your chances in the success."

"We won't count the chances in the success. And I don't believe thirty-five hundred would go any further in New York than three thousand in Boston."

"But you don't live on three thousand here?"

"No; my wife has a little property."

"Well, she won't lose the income if you go to New York. I suppose you pay six or seven hundred a year for your house here. You can get plenty of flats in New York for the same money; and I understand you can get all sorts of provisions for less than you pay now—three or four cents on the pound. Come!"

This was by no means the first talk they had had about the matter; every three or four months during the past two years the syndicate man had dropped in upon March to air the scheme and to get his impressions of it. This had happened so often that it had come to be a sort of joke between them. But now Fulkerson clearly meant business, and March had a struggle to maintain himself in a firm poise of refusal.

"I dare say it wouldn't—or it needn't—cost so very much more, but I don't want to go to New York; or my wife doesn't. It's the same thing."

"A good deal samer," Fulkerson admitted.

March did not quite like his candour, and he went on with dignity. "It's very natural she shouldn't. She has always lived in Boston; she's attached to

the place. Now, if you were going to start *The Fifth Wheel* in Boston——”

Fulkerson slowly and sadly shook his head, but decidedly. “Wouldn’t do. You might as well say St. Louis or Cincinnati. There’s only one city that belongs to the whole country, and that’s New York.”

“Yes, I know,” sighed March; “and Boston belongs to the Bostonians; but they like you to make yourself at home while you’re visiting.”

“If you’ll agree to make phrases like that, right along, and get them into *The Round-Robin* somehow, I’ll say four thousand,” said Fulkerson. “You think it over now, March. You *talk* it over with Mrs. March; I know you will, anyway; and I might as well make a virtue of advising you to do it. Tell her I advised you to do it, and you let me know before next Saturday what you’ve decided.”

March shut down the rolling top of his desk in the corner of the room, and walked Fulkerson out before him. It was so late that the last of the chorewomen who washed down the marble halls and stairs of the great building had wrung out her floor-cloth and departed, leaving spotless stone and a clean damp smell in the darkening corridors behind her.

“Couldn’t offer you such swell quarters in New York, March,” Fulkerson said as he went tack-tack-ing down the steps with his small boot-heels. “But I’ve got my eye on a little house round in West Eleventh Street, that I’m going to fit up for my

bachelor's hall in the third story, and adapt for *The Lone Hand* in the first and second, if this thing goes through; and I guess we'll be pretty comfortable. It's right on the Sand Strip—no malaria of *any* kind."

"I don't know that I'm going to share its salubrity with you yet," March sighed in an obvious travail which gave Fulkerson hopes.

"Oh yes, you are," he coaxed. "Now, you talk it over with your wife. You give her a fair, unprejudiced chance at the thing on its merits, and I'm very much mistaken in Mrs. March if she doesn't tell you to go in and win. We're bound to win!"

They stood on the outside steps of the vast edifice beetling like a granite crag above them, with the stone groups of an allegory of life-insurance foreshortened in the bas-relief overhead. March absently lifted his eyes to it. It was suddenly strange after so many years' familiarity, and so was the well-known street in its Saturday-evening solitude. He asked himself, with prophetic homesickness, if it were an omen of what was to be. But he only said musingly, "A fortnightly. You know that didn't work in England. *The Fortnightly* is published once a month now."

"It works in France," Fulkerson retorted. "The *Revue des Deux Mondes* is still published twice a month. I guess we can make it work in America—with illustrations."

"Going to have illustrations?"

"My dear boy! What are you giving me? Do

I look like the sort of lunatic who would start a thing in the twilight of the nineteenth century *without* illustrations? *Come off!*"

"Ah, that complicates it! I don't know anything about art." March's look of discouragement confessed the hold the scheme had taken upon him.

"I don't want you to!" Fulkerson retorted. "Don't you suppose I shall have an art man?"

"And will they—the artists—work at a reduced rate too, like the writers, with the hopes of a share in the success?"

"Of course they will! And if I want any particular man, for a card, I'll pay him big money besides. But I can get plenty of first-rate sketches on my own terms. You'll see! They'll *pour* in!"

"Look here, Fulkerson," said March, "you'd better call this fortnightly of yours *The Madness of the Half-Moon*; or *Bedlam Broke Loose* wouldn't be bad! Why do you throw away all your hard earnings on such a crazy venture? Don't do it!" The kindness which March had always felt, in spite of his wife's first misgivings and reservations, for the merry, hopeful, slangy, energetic little creature trembled in his voice. They had both formed a friendship for Fulkerson during the week they were together in Quebec. When he was not working the newspapers there, he went about with them over the familiar ground they were showing their children, and was simply grateful for the chance, as well as very entertaining about it all. The children liked him, too; when they got the clew to his intention,

and found that he was not quite serious in many of the things he said, they thought he was great fun. They were always glad when their father brought him home on the occasion of Fulkerson's visits to Boston; and Mrs. March, though of a charier hospitality, welcomed Fulkerson with a grateful sense of his admiration for her husband. He had a way of treating March with deference, as an older and abler man, and of qualifying the freedom he used toward every one with an implication that March tolerated it voluntarily, which she thought very sweet, and even refined.

"Ah, *now* you're talking like a man and a brother " said Fulkerson. "Why, March, old man, do you suppose I'd come on here and try to talk you into this thing if I wasn't morally, if I wasn't perfectly, *sure* of success? There isn't any if or and about it. I know my ground, every inch; and I don't stand alone on it," he added, with a significance which did not escape March. "When you've made up your mind, I can give you the proof; but I'm not at liberty now to say anything more. I tell you it's going to be a triumphal march from the word go, with coffee and lemonade for the procession along the whole line. All you've got to do is to fall in." He stretched out his hand to March. "You let me know as soon as you can."

March deferred taking his hand till he could ask, "Where are you going?"

"Parker House. Take the half-past ten for New York to-night."

"I thought I might walk your way." March looked at his watch. "But I shouldn't have time. Good-bye!"

He now let Fulkerson have his hand, and they exchanged a cordial pressure. Fulkerson started off at a quick, light pace. Half a block away he stopped, turned round, and seeing March still standing where he had left him, he called back joyously, "I've got the name!"

"What?"

"*Every Other Week.*"

"It isn't bad."

"Ta-ta!"

## II.

ALL the way up to the South End March prolonged his talk with Fulkerson, and at his door in Nankeen Square he closed the parley with a plump refusal to go to New York on any terms. His daughter Bella was lying in wait for him in the hall, and she threw her arms round his neck with the exuberance of her fourteen years, and with something of the histrionic intention of her sex. He pressed on, with her clinging about him, to the library, and, in the glow of his decision against Fulkerson, kissed his wife, where she sat by the study lamp reading the *Transcript* through her first pair of eye-glasses: it was agreed in the family that she looked distinguished in them, or at any rate cultivated. She took them off to give him a glance of question, and their son Tom looked up from his book for a moment; he was in his last year at the high-school, and was preparing for Harvard.

"I didn't get away from the office till half-past five," March explained to his wife's glance, "and then I walked. I suppose dinner's waiting. I'm sorry, but I won't do it any more."

At table he tried to be gay with Bella, who

babbled at him with a voluble pertness, which her brother had often advised her parents to check in her, unless they wanted her to be universally despised.

"Papa," she shouted, at last, "you're not listening!"

As soon as possible his wife told the children they might be excused. Then she asked, "What is it, Basil?"

"What is what?" he retorted, with a specious brightness that did not avail.

"What is on your mind?"

"How do you know there's anything?"

"Your kissing me so when you came in, for one thing."

"Don't I always kiss you when I come in?"

"Not now. I suppose it isn't necessary any more. *Cela va sans baiser.*"

"Yes, I guess it's so; we get along without the symbolism now." He stopped, but she knew that he had not finished.

"Is it about your business? Have they done anything more?"

"No; I'm still in the dark. I don't know whether they mean to supplant me, or whether they ever did. But I wasn't thinking about that. Fulkerson has been to see me again."

"Fulkerson?" She brightened at the name, and March smiled too. "Why didn't you bring him to dinner?"

"I wanted to talk with you. Then you *do* like him?"

“What has that got to do with it, Basil?”

“Nothing! nothing! That is, he was boring away about that scheme of his again. He’s got it into definite shape at last.”

“What shape?”

March outlined it for her, and his wife seized its main features with the intuitive sense of affairs which makes women such good business-men, when they will let it.

“It *sounds* perfectly crazy,” she said finally. “But it mayn’t be. The only thing I didn’t like about Mr. Fulkerson was his always wanting to chance things. But what have you got to do with it?”

“What have I got to do with it?” March toyed with the delay the question gave him; then he said, with a sort of deprecatory laugh, “It seems that Fulkerson has had his eye on me ever since we met that night on the Quebec boat. I opened up pretty freely to him, as you do to a man you never expect to see again, and when I found he was in that newspaper syndicate business, I told him about my early literary ambitions——”

“You can’t say that *I* ever discouraged them, Basil,” his wife put in. “I should have been willing, any time, to give up everything for them.”

“Well, he says that I first suggested this brilliant idea to him. Perhaps I did; I don’t remember. When he told me about his supplying literature to newspapers for simultaneous publication, he says I asked, ‘Why not apply the principle of co-opera-

tion to a magazine, and run it in the interest of the contributors?' and that set him to thinking, and he thought out his plan of a periodical, which should pay authors and artists a low price outright for their work, and give them a chance of the profits in the way of a percentage. After all, it isn't so very different from the chances an author takes when he publishes a book. And Fulkerson thinks that the novelty of the thing would pique public curiosity, if it didn't arouse public sympathy. And the long and short of it is, Isabel, that he wants me to help edit it."

"To edit it?" His wife caught her breath, and she took a little time to realise the fact, while she stared hard at her husband to make sure he was not joking.

"Yes. He says he owes it all to me; that I invented the idea—the germ—the microbe."

His wife had now realised the fact, at least in a degree that excluded trifling with it. "That is very honourable of Mr. Fulkerson; and if he owes it to you, it was the least he could do." Having recognised her husband's claim to the honour done him, she began to kindle with a sense of the honour itself, and the value of the opportunity. "It's a very high compliment to *you*, Basil; a *very* high compliment. And you could give up this wretched insurance business that you've always hated so, and that's making you so unhappy now that you think they're going to take it from you. Give it up, and take Mr. Fulkerson's offer! It's a perfect inter-

position, coming just at this time! Why, do it! Mercy!" she suddenly arrested herself, "he wouldn't expect *you* to get along on the possible profits?" Her face expressed the awfulness of the notion.

March smiled reassuringly, and waited to give himself the pleasure of the sensation he meant to give her. "If I'll make striking phrases for it and edit it too, he'll give me four thousand dollars."

He leaned back in his chair, and stuck his hands deep into his pockets, and watched his wife's face, luminous with the emotions that flashed through her mind—doubt, joy, anxiety.

"Basil! You don't mean it! Why, *take* it! Take it *instantly*! Oh, what a thing to happen! Oh, what luck! But you deserve it, if you first suggested it. What an escape, what a triumph over all those hateful insurance people! O Basil, I'm afraid he'll change his mind! You ought to have accepted on the spot. You might have *known* I would approve, and you could *so* easily have taken it back if I didn't. Telegraph him now! Run right out with the despatch! Or we can send Tom!"

In these imperatives of Mrs. March's there was always much of the conditional. She meant that he should do what she said, if it were entirely right; and she never meant to be considered as having urged him.

"And suppose his enterprise went wrong?" her husband suggested.

"It won't *go* wrong. Hasn't he made a success of his syndicate?"

"He says so—yes."

"Very well, then, it stands to reason that he'll succeed in this, too. He wouldn't undertake it if he didn't know it would succeed; he must have capital."

"It will take a great deal to get such a thing going; and even if he's got an Angel behind him——"

She caught at the word: "An Angel?"

"It's what the theatrical people call a financial backer. He dropped a hint of something of that kind."

"Of course, he's got an Angel," said his wife, promptly adopting the word. "And even if he hadn't, still, Basil, I should be willing to have you risk it. The risk isn't so great, is it? We shouldn't be ruined if it failed altogether. With our stocks we have two thousand a year, anyway, and we could pinch through on that till you got into some other business afterward, especially if we'd saved something out of your salary while it lasted. Basil, I want you to try it! I know it will give you a new lease of life to have a congenial occupation." March laughed, but his wife persisted. "I'm all for your trying it, Basil; indeed I am. If it's an experiment, you can give it up."

"It can give me up, too."

"Oh, nonsense! I guess there's not much fear of that. Now, I want you to telegraph Mr. Fulkerson, so that he'll find the despatch waiting for him when he gets to New York. I'll take the whole responsibility, Basil, and I'll risk all the consequences."

### III.

MARCH'S face had sobered more and more as she followed one hopeful burst with another, and now it expressed a positive pain. But he forced a smile, and said: "There's a little condition attached. Where did you suppose it was to be published?"

"Why, in Boston, of course. Where else should it be published?"

She looked at him for the intention of his question so searchingly that he quite gave up the attempt to be gay about it. "No," he said gravely, "it's to be published in New York."

She fell back in her chair. "In New York?" She leaned forward over the table toward him, as if to make sure that she heard aright, and said, with all the keen reproach that he could have expected, "*In New York*, Basil! Oh, how *could* you have let me go on?"

He had a sufficiently rueful face in owning, "I oughtn't to have done it, but I got started wrong. I couldn't help putting the best foot forward at first—or as long as the whole thing was in the air. I didn't know that you would take so much to the general enterprise, or else I should have mentioned

the New York condition at once ; but of course that puts an end to it."

"Oh, of course," she assented sadly. "We *couldn't* go to New York."

"No, I know that," he said ; and with this a perverse desire to tempt her to the impossibility awoke in him, though he was really quite cold about the affair himself now. "Fulkerson thought we could get a nice flat in New York for about what the interest and taxes came to here, and provisions are cheaper. But I should rather not experiment at my time of life. If I could have been caught younger, I might have been inured to New York, but I don't believe I could stand it now."

"How I hate to have you talk that way, Basil ! You are young enough to try anything—anywhere ; but you know I don't like New York. I don't approve of it. It's so *big*, and so hideous ! Of course I shouldn't mind that ; but I've always lived in Boston, and the children were born and have all their friendships and associations here." She added, with the helplessness that discredited her good-sense and did her injustice, "I have just got them both into the Friday afternoon class at Papanti's, and you know how difficult that is."

March could not fail to take advantage of an occasion like this. "Well, that alone ought to settle it. Under the circumstances it would be flying in the face of Providence to leave Boston. The mere fact of a brilliant opening like that offered me on *The Microbe*, and the halcyon future which Fulkerson

promises if we'll come to New York, is as dust in the balance against the advantages of the Friday afternoon class."

"Basil," she appealed solemnly, "have I ever interfered with your career?"

"I never had any for you to interfere with, my dear."

"Basil! Haven't I always had faith in you? And don't you suppose that if I thought it would really be for your advancement, I would go to New York or anywhere with you?"

"No, my dear, I don't," he teased. "If it would be for my salvation, yes, perhaps; but not short of that; and I should have to prove by a cloud of witnesses that it would. I don't blame you. I wasn't born in Boston, but I understand how you feel. And really, my dear," he added, without irony, "I never seriously thought of asking you to go to New York. I *was* dazzled by Fulkerson's offer, I'll own that; but his choice of me as editor sapped my confidence in him."

"I don't like to hear you say that, Basil," she entreated.

"Well, of course there were mitigating circumstances. I could see that Fulkerson meant to keep the whip-hand himself, and that was reassuring. And besides, if the Reciprocity Life should happen not to want my services any longer, it wouldn't be quite like giving up a certainty; though, as a matter of business, I let Fulkerson get that impression; I felt rather sneaking to do it. But, if the worst

comes to the worst, I can look about for something to do in Boston; and, anyhow, people don't starve on two thousand a year, though it's convenient to have five. The fact is, I'm too old to change so radically. If you don't like my saying that, then *you* are, Isabel, and so are the children. I've no right to take them from the home we've made, and to change the whole course of their lives, unless I can assure them of something, and I can't assure them of anything. Boston is big enough for us, and it's certainly prettier than New York. I always feel a little proud of hailing from Boston; my pleasure in the place mounts the further I get away from it. But I do appreciate it, my dear, I've no more desire to leave it than you have. You may be sure that if you don't want to take the children out of the Friday afternoon class, I don't want to leave my library here, and all the ways I've got set in. We'll keep on. Very likely the company won't supplant me, and if it does, and Watkins gets the place, he'll give me a subordinate position of some sort. Cheer up, Isabel! I have put Satan and his angel, Fulkerson, behind me, and it's all right. Let's go in to the children."

He came round the table to Isabel, where she sat in a growing distraction, and lifted her by the waist from her chair.

She sighed deeply. "Shall we tell the children about it?"

"No. What's the use, now?"

"There wouldn't be any," she assented. When

they entered the family room, where the boy and girl sat on either side of the lamp working out the lessons for Monday which they had left over from the day before, she asked, "Children, how would you like to live in New York?"

Bella made haste to get in her word first. "And give up the Friday afternoon class?" she wailed.

Tom growled from his book, without lifting his eyes, "I shouldn't want to go to Columbia. They haven't got any dormitories, and you have to board round anywhere. Are you going to New York?" He now deigned to look up at his father.

"No, Tom. You and Bella have decided me against it. Your perspective shows the affair in its true proportions. I had an offer to go to New York, but I've refused it."

#### IV.

MARCH'S irony fell harmless from the children's preoccupation with their own affairs, but he knew that his wife felt it, and this added to the bitterness which prompted it. He blamed her for letting her provincial narrowness prevent his accepting Fulker-son's offer quite as much as if he had otherwise entirely wished to accept it. His world, like most worlds, had been superficially a disappointment. He was no richer than at the beginning, though in marrying he had given up some tastes, some preferences, some aspirations, in the hope of indulging them later, with larger means and larger leisure. His wife had not urged him to do it; in fact, her pride, as she said, was in his fitness for the life he had renounced; but she had acquiesced, and they had been very happy together. That is to say, they made up their quarrels or ignored them.

They often accused each other of being selfish and indifferent, but she knew that he would always sacrifice himself for her and the children; and he, on his part, with many gibes and mockeries, wholly trusted in her. They had grown practically tolerant of each other's disagreeable traits; and the danger

that really threatened them was that they should grow too well satisfied with themselves, if not with each other. They were not sentimental, they were rather matter-of-fact in their motives; but they had both a sort of humorous fondness for sentimentality. They liked to play with the romantic, from the safe vantage-ground of their real practicality, and to divine the poetry of the commonplace. Their peculiar point of view separated them from most other people, with whom their means of self-comparison were not so good since their marriage as before. Then they had travelled and seen much of the world, and they had formed tastes which they had not always been able to indulge, but of which they felt that the possession reflected distinction on them. It enabled them to look down upon those who were without such tastes; but they were not ill-natured, and so they did not look down so much with contempt as with amusement. In their unfashionable neighbourhood they had the fame of being not exclusive precisely, but very much wrapt up in themselves and their children.

Mrs. March was reputed to be very cultivated, and Mr. March even more so, among the simpler folk around them. Their house had some good pictures, which her aunt had brought home from Europe in more affluent days, and it abounded in books on which he spent more than he ought. They had beautified it in every way, and had unconsciously taken credit to themselves for it. They felt, with a glow almost of virtue, how perfectly it

fitted their lives and their children's, and they believed that somehow it expressed their characters—that it was like them. They went out very little; she remained shut up in its refinement, working the good of her own; and he went to his business, and hurried back to forget it, and dream his dream of intellectual achievement in the flattering atmosphere of her sympathy. He could not conceal from himself that his divided life was somewhat like Charles Lamb's, and there were times when, as he had expressed to Fulkerson, he believed that its division was favourable to the freshness of his interest in literature. It certainly kept it a high privilege, a sacred refuge. Now and then he wrote something, and got it printed after long delays, and when they met on the St. Lawrence, Fulkerson had some of March's verses in his pocket-book, which he had cut out of a stray newspaper and carried about for years, because they pleased his fancy so much; they formed an immediate bond of union between the men when their authorship was traced and owned, and this gave a pretty colour of romance to their acquaintance. But for the most part, March was satisfied to read. He was proud of reading critically, and he kept in the current of literary interests and controversies. It all seemed to him, and to his wife at second-hand, very meritorious; he could not help contrasting his life and its inner elegance with that of other men who had no such resources. He thought that he was not arrogant about it, because he did full justice to the good qualities of those

other people; he congratulated himself upon the democratic instincts which enabled him to do this; and neither he nor his wife supposed that they were selfish persons. On the contrary, they were very sympathetic; there was no good cause that they did not wish well; they had a generous scorn of all kinds of narrow-heartedness; if it had ever come into their way to sacrifice themselves for others, they thought they would have done so, but they never asked why it had not come in their way. They were very gentle and kind, even when most elusive; and they taught their children to loathe all manner of social cruelty. March was of so watchful a conscience in some respects that he denied himself the pensive pleasure of lapsing into the melancholy of unfulfilled aspirations; but he did not see that if he had abandoned them, it had been for what he held dearer; generally he felt as if he had turned from them with a high altruistic aim. The practical expression of his life was that it was enough to provide well for his family; to have cultivated tastes, and to gratify them to the extent of his means; to be rather distinguished, even in the simplification of his desires. He believed, and his wife believed, that if the time ever came when he really wished to make a sacrifice to the fulfilment of the aspirations so long postponed, she would be ready to join with heart and hand.

When he went to her room from his library, where she left him the whole evening with the children, he found her before the glass thoughtfully

removing the first dismantling pin from her back hair.

"I can't help feeling," she grieved into the mirror, "that it's I who keep you from accepting that offer. I know it is! I could go West with you, or into a new country—anywhere; but New York terrifies me. I don't like New York, I never did; it disheartens and distracts me; I can't find myself in it; I shouldn't know how to shop. I know I'm foolish and narrow and provincial," she went on; "but I could never have any inner quiet in New York; I couldn't live in the spirit there. I suppose people do. It can't be that all those millions——"

"Oh, not so bad as that!" March interposed, laughing. "There aren't quite two."

"I thought there were four or five. Well, no matter. You see what I am, Basil. I'm terribly limited. I couldn't make my sympathies go round two million people; I should be wretched. I suppose I'm standing in the way of your highest interest, but I can't help it. We took each other for better or worse, and you must try to bear with me——" She broke off and began to cry.

"*Stop it!*" shouted March. "I tell you I never cared anything for Fulkerson's scheme or entertained it seriously, and I shouldn't, if he'd proposed to carry it out in Boston." This was not quite true; but in the retrospect it seemed sufficiently so for the purposes of argument. "Don't say another word about it. The thing's over now, and I don't want to think of it any more. We

couldn't change its nature if we talked all night. But I want you to understand that it isn't your limitations that are in the way. It's mine. I shouldn't have the courage to take such a place; I don't think I'm fit for it; and that's the long and short of it."

"Oh, you don't know how it hurts me to have you say that, Basil."

The next morning, as they sat together at breakfast, without the children, whom they let lie late on Sunday, Mrs. March said to her husband, silent over his fish-balls and baked beans: "We will go to New York. I've decided it."

"Well, it takes two to decide that," March retorted. "We are not going to New York."

"Yes, we are. I've thought it out. Now, listen."

"Oh, I'm willing to listen," he consented airily.

"You've always wanted to get out of the insurance business, and now with that fear of being turned out which you have, you mustn't neglect this offer. I suppose it has its risks, but it's a risk keeping on as we are; and perhaps you will make a great success of it. I do want you to try, Basil. If I could once feel that you had fairly seen what you could do in literature, I should die happy."

"Not immediately after, I hope," he suggested, taking the second cup of coffee she had been pouring out for him. "And Boston?"

"We needn't make a complete break. We can keep this place for the present, anyway; we could

let it for the winter, and come back in the summer next year. It would be change enough from New York."

"Fulkerson and I hadn't got as far as to talk of a vacation."

"No matter. The children and I could come. And if you didn't like New York, or the enterprise failed, you could get into something in Boston again; and we have enough to live on till you did. Yes, Basil, I'm going."

"I can see by the way your chin trembles that nothing could stop you. *You* may go to New York if you *wish*, Isabel, but I shall stay here."

"Be serious, Basil. I'm in earnest."

"Serious? If I were any more serious I should shed tears. Come, my dear, I know what you mean, and if I had my heart set on this thing—Fulkerson always calls it 'this thing'—I would cheerfully accept any sacrifice you could make to it. But I'd rather not offer you up on a shrine I don't feel any particular faith in. I'm very comfortable where I am; that is, I know just where the pinch comes, and if it comes harder, why, I've got used to bearing that kind of pinch. I'm too old to change pinches."

"Now, that *does* decide me."

"It decides me, too."

"I will take all the responsibility, Basil," she pleaded.

"Oh yes; but you'll hand it back to me as soon as you've carried your point with it. There's nothing mean about you, Isabel, where responsibility

is concerned. No; if I do this thing—Fulkerson again! I can't get away from 'this thing'; it's ominous—I must do it because I want to do it, and not because you wish that you wanted me to do it. I understand your position, Isabel, and that you're really acting from a generous impulse, but there's nothing so precarious at our time of life as a generous impulse. When we were younger we could stand it; we could give way to it and take the consequences. But now we can't bear it. We must act from cold reason even in the ardour of self-sacrifice."

"Oh, as if you did that!" his wife retorted.

"Is that any cause why you shouldn't?" She could not say that it was, and he went on triumphantly: "No, I won't take you away from the only safe place on the planet, and plunge you into the most perilous, and then have you say in your revulsion of feeling that you were all against it from the first, and you gave way because you saw I had my heart set on it." He supposed he was treating the matter humorously, but in this sort of banter between husband and wife there is always much more than the joking. March had seen some pretty feminine inconsistencies and trepidations which once charmed him in his wife hardening into traits of middle-age, which were very like those of less interesting older women. The sight moved him with a kind of pathos, but he felt the result hindering and vexatious.

She now retorted that if he did not choose to take her at her word he need not, but that whatever he

did she should have nothing to reproach herself with ; and, at least, he could not say that she had trapped him into anything.

"What do you mean by trapping ?" he demanded.

"I don't know what *you* call it," she answered ; "but when you get me to commit myself to a thing by leaving out the most essential point, *I* call it trapping."

"I wonder you stop at trapping, if you think I got you to favour Fulkerson's scheme, and then sprung New York on you. I don't suppose you do, though. But I guess we won't talk about it any more."

He went out for a long walk, and she went to her room. They lunched silently together in the presence of their children, who knew that they had been quarrelling, but were easily indifferent to the fact, as children get to be in such cases ; nature defends their youth, and the unhappiness which they behold does not infect them. In the evening, after the boy and girl had gone to bed, the father and mother resumed their talk. He would have liked to take it up at the point from which it wandered into hostilities, for he felt it lamentable that a matter which so seriously concerned them should be confused in the fumes of senseless anger ; and he was willing to make a tacit acknowledgment of his own error by recurring to the question, but she would not be content with this, and he had to concede explicitly to her weakness that she really meant it when she had asked

him to accept Fulkerson's offer. He said he knew that; and he began soberly to talk over their prospects in the event of their going to New York.

"Oh, I see you are going!" she twitted.

"I'm going to stay," he answered, "and let them turn me out of my agency here!" and in this bitterness their talk ended.

## V.

HIS wife made no attempt to renew their talk before March went to his business in the morning, and they parted in dry offence. Their experience was that these things always came right of themselves at last, and they usually let them. He knew that she had really tried to consent to a thing that was repugnant to her, and in his heart he gave her more credit for the effort than he had allowed her openly. She knew that she had made it with the reservation he accused her of, and that he had a right to feel sore at what she could not help. But he left her to brood over his ingratitude, and she suffered him to go heavy and unfriended to meet the chances of the day. He said to himself that if she had assented cordially to the conditions of Fulkerson's offer, he would have had the courage to take all the other risks himself, and would have had the satisfaction of resigning his place. As it was, he must wait till he was removed ; and he figured with bitter pleasure the pain she would feel when he came home some day and told her he had been supplanted, after it was too late to close with Fulkerson.

He found a letter on his desk from the secretary,

“Dictated,” in type-writing, which briefly informed him that Mr. Hubbell, the Inspector of Agencies, would be in Boston on Wednesday, and would call at his office during the forenoon. The letter was not different in tone from many that he had formerly received; but the visit announced was out of the usual order, and March believed he read his fate in it. During the eighteen years of his connection with it—first as a subordinate in the Boston office, and finally as its general agent there—he had seen a good many changes in the Reciprocity; presidents, vice-presidents, actuaries, and general agents had come and gone, but there had always seemed to be a recognition of his efficiency, or at least sufficiency, and there had never been any manner of trouble, no question of accounts, no apparent dissatisfaction with his management, until latterly, when there had begun to come from headquarters some suggestions of enterprise in certain ways, which gave him his first suspicions of his clerk Watkins’s willingness to succeed him; they embodied some of Watkins’s ideas. The things proposed seemed to March undignified, and even vulgar; he had never thought himself wanting in energy, though probably he had left the business to take its own course in the old lines more than he realised. Things had always gone so smoothly that he had sometimes fancied a peculiar regard for him in the management, which he had the weakness to attribute to an appreciation of what he occasionally did in literature, though in saner moments he felt how impossible this was.

Beyond a reference from Mr. Hubbell to some piece of March's, which had happened to meet his eye, no one in the management ever gave a sign of consciousness that their service was adorned by an obscure literary man ; and Mr. Hubbell himself had the effect of regarding the excursions of March's pen as a sort of joke, and of winking at them, as he might have winked if once in a way he had found him a little the gayer for dining.

March wore through the day gloomily, but he had it on his conscience not to show any resentment toward Watkins, whom he suspected of wishing to supplant him, and even of working to do so. Through this self-denial he reached a better mind concerning his wife. He determined not to make her suffer needlessly, if the worst came to the worst ; she would suffer enough, at the best, and till the worst came he would spare her, and not say anything about the letter he had got.

But when they met, her first glance divined that something had happened, and her first question frustrated his generous intention. He had to tell her about the letter. She would not allow that it had any significance ; but she wished him to make an end of his anxieties, and forestall whatever it might portend by resigning his place at once. She said she was quite ready to go to New York ; she had been thinking it all over, and now she really wanted to go. He answered, soberly, that he had thought it over, too ; and he did not wish to leave Boston, where he had lived so long, or try a new

way of life if he could help it. He insisted that he was quite selfish in this ; in their concessions their quarrel vanished ; they agreed that whatever happened would be for the best ; and the next day he went to his office fortified for any event.

His destiny, if tragical, presented itself with an aspect which he might have found comic if it had been another's destiny. Mr. Hubbell brought March's removal, softened in the guise of a promotion. The management at New York, it appeared, had acted upon a suggestion of Mr. Hubbell's, and now authorised him to offer March the editorship of the monthly paper published in the interest of the company ; his office would include the authorship of circulars and leaflets, in behalf of life insurance, and would give play to the literary talent which Mr. Hubbell had brought to the attention of the management ; his salary would be nearly as much as at present, but the work would not take his whole time, and in a place like New York he could get a great deal of outside writing, which they would not object to his doing.

Mr. Hubbell seemed so sure of his acceptance of a place in every way congenial to a man of literary tastes, that March was afterward sorry he dismissed the proposition with obvious irony, and had needlessly hurt Hubbell's feelings ; but Mrs. March had no such regrets. She was only afraid that he had not made his rejection contemptuous enough. "And now," she said, "telegraph Mr. Fulkerson, and we will go at once."

"I suppose I could still get Watkins's former place," March suggested.

"Never!" she retorted. "Telegraph instantly!"

They were only afraid now that Fulkerson might have changed his mind, and they had a wretched day in which they heard nothing from him. It ended with his answering March's telegram in person. They were so glad of his coming, and so touched by his satisfaction with his bargain, that they laid all the facts of the case before him. He entered fully into March's sense of the joke latent in Mr. Hubbell's proposition; and he tried to make Mrs. March believe that he shared her resentment of the indignity offered her husband.

March made a show of willingness to release him in view of the changed situation, saying that he held him to nothing. Fulkerson laughed, and asked him how soon he thought he could come on to New York. He refused to reopen the question of March's fitness with him; he said they had gone into that thoroughly, but he recurred to it with Mrs. March, and confirmed her belief in his good-sense on all points. She had been from the first moment defiantly confident of her husband's ability, but till she had talked the matter over with Fulkerson, she was secretly not sure of it; or, at least, she was not sure that March was not right in distrusting himself. When she clearly understood, now, what Fulkerson intended, she had no longer a doubt. He explained how the enterprise differed from others, and how he needed for its

direction a man who combined general business experience and business ideas with a love for the thing, and a natural aptness for it. He did not want a young man, and yet he wanted youth—its freshness, its zest—such as March would feel in a thing he could put his whole heart into. He would not run in ruts, like an old fellow who had got hackneyed ; he would not have any hobbies ; he would not have any friends nor any enemies. Besides, he would have to meet people, and March was a man that people took to ; she knew that herself ; he had a kind of charm. The editorial management was going to be kept in the background, as far as the public was concerned ; the public was to suppose that the thing ran itself. Fulkerson did not care for a great literary reputation in his editor—he implied that March had a very pretty little one. At the same time the relations between the contributors and the management were to be much more intimate than usual. Fulkerson felt his personal disqualification for working the thing socially, and he counted upon Mr. March for that ; that was to say, he counted upon Mrs. March.

She protested he must not count upon her ; but it by no means disabled Fulkerson's judgment in her view that March really seemed more than anything else a fancy of his. He had been a fancy of hers ; and the sort of affectionate respect with which Fulkerson spoke of him laid for ever some doubt she had of the fineness of Fulkerson's manners, and reconciled her to the graphic slanginess of his speech.

The affair was now irretrievable, but she gave her approval to it as superbly as if it were submitted in its inception. Only, Mr. Fulkerson must not suppose she should ever like New York. She would not deceive him on that point. She never should like it. She did not conceal, either, that she did not like taking the children out of the Friday evening class ; and she did not believe that Tom would ever be reconciled to going to Columbia. She took courage from Fulkerson's suggestion that it was possible for Tom to come to Harvard even from New York ; and she heaped him with questions concerning the domiciliation of the family in that city. He tried to know something about the matter, and he succeeded in seeming interested in points necessarily indifferent to him.

## VI.

IN the uprooting and transplanting of their home that followed, Mrs. March often trembled before distant problems and possible contingencies, but she was never troubled by present difficulties. She kept up with tireless energy; and in the moments of dejection and misgiving which harassed her husband she remained dauntless, and put heart into him when he had lost it altogether.

She arranged to leave the children in the house with the servants, while she went on with March to look up a dwelling of some sort in New York. It made him sick to think of it; and when it came to the point, he would rather have given up the whole enterprise. She had to nerve him to it, to represent more than once that now they had no choice but to make this experiment. Every detail of parting was anguish to him. He got consolation out of the notion of letting the house furnished for the winter; that implied their return to it; but it cost him pangs of the keenest misery to advertise it; and when a tenant was actually found, it was all he could do to give him the lease. He tried his wife's love and patience as a man must to whom the future

is easy in the mass, but terrible as it translates itself piecemeal into the present. He experienced remorse in the presence of inanimate things he was going to leave as if they had sensibly reproached him, and an anticipative homesickness that seemed to stop his heart. Again and again his wife had to make him reflect that his depression was not prophetic. She convinced him of what he already knew; and persuaded him against his knowledge that he could be keeping an eye out for something to take hold of in Boston if they could not stand New York. She ended by telling him that it was too bad to make her comfort him in a trial that was really so much more a trial to her. She had to support him in a last access of despair on their way to the Albany depôt the morning they started to New York; but when the final details had been dealt with, the tickets bought, the trunks checked, and the handbags hung up in their car, and the future had massed itself again at a safe distance and was seven hours and two hundred miles away, his spirits began to rise and hers to sink. He would have been willing to celebrate the taste, the domestic refinement of the ladies' waiting-room in the depôt, where they had spent a quarter of an hour before the train started. He said he did not believe there was another station in the world where mahogany rocking-chairs were provided; that the dull red warmth of the walls was as cosy as an evening-lamp, and that he always hoped to see a fire kindled on that vast hearth, and under that æsthetic mantel, but he supposed now he never

should. He said it was all very different from that tunnel, the old Albany depôt, where they had waited the morning they went to New York when they were starting on their wedding journey.

"The *morning*, Basil!" cried his wife. "We went at *night*; and we were going to take the boat, but it stormed so!" She gave him a glance of such reproach that he could not answer anything, and now she asked him whether he supposed their cook and second girl would be contented with one of those dark holes where they put girls to sleep in New York flats, and what she should do if Margaret, especially, left her. He ventured to suggest that Margaret would probably like the city; but if she left, there were plenty of other girls to be had in New York. She replied that there were none she could trust, and that she knew Margaret would not stay. He asked her why she took her, then; why she did not give her up at once; and she answered that it would be inhuman to give her up just in the edge of the winter. She had promised to keep her; and Margaret was pleased with the notion of going to New York, where she had a cousin.

"Then perhaps she'll be pleased with the notion of staying," he said.

"Oh, much you know about it!" she retorted; and in view of the hypothetical difficulty and his want of sympathy, she fell into a gloom, from which she roused herself at last by declaring that if there was nothing else in the flat they took, there should be a light kitchen and a bright sunny bedroom for

Margaret. He expressed the belief that they could easily find such a flat as that, and she denounced his fatal optimism, which buoyed him up in the absence of an undertaking, and let him drop into the depths of despair in its presence.

He owned this defect of temperament, but he said that it compensated the opposite in her character. "I suppose that's one of the chief uses of marriage; people supplement each other, and form a pretty fair sort of human being together. The only drawback to the theory is that unmarried people seem each as complete and whole as a married pair."


She refused to be amused; she turned her face to the window and put her handkerchief up under her veil.

It was not till the dining-car was attached to their train that they were both able to escape for an hour into the care-free mood of their earlier travels, when they were so easily taken out of themselves. The time had been when they could have found enough in the conjectural fortunes and characters of their fellow-passengers to occupy them. This phase of their youth had lasted long, and the world was still full of novelty and interest for them; but it required all the charm of the dining-car now to lay the anxieties that beset them. It was so potent for the moment, however, that they could take an objective view at their sitting cosily down there together, as if they had only themselves in the world. They wondered what the children were doing, the children who possessed them so intensely when present,

and now, by a fantastic operation of absence, seemed almost non-existent. They tried to be homesick for them, but failed; they recognised with comfortable self-aborrence that this was terrible, but owned a fascination in being alone; at the same time they could not imagine how people felt who never had any children. They contrasted the luxury of dining that way, with every advantage except a band of music, and the old way of rushing out to snatch a fearful joy at the lunch-counters of the Worcester and Springfield and New Haven stations. They had not gone often to New York since their wedding journey, but they had gone often enough to have noted the change from the lunch-counter to the lunch-basket brought in the train, from which you could subsist with more ease and dignity, but seemed destined to a superabundance of pickles, whatever you ordered.

They thought well of themselves now that they could be both critical and tolerant of flavours not very sharply distinguished from one another in their dinner, and they lingered over their coffee and watched the autumn landscape through the windows.

"Not quite so loud a pattern of calico this year," he said, with patronising forbearance toward the painted woodlands whirling by. "Do you see how the foreground next the train rushes from us and the background keeps ahead of us, while the middle distance seems stationary? I don't think I ever noticed that effect before. There ought to be



something literary in it : retreating past and advancing future, and deceitfully permanent present : something like that ? ”

His wife brushed some crumbs from her lap before rising. “ Yes. You mustn’t waste any of these ideas now.”

“ Oh no ; it would be money out of Fulkerson’s pocket.”

## VII.

THEY went to a quiet hotel far down-town, and took a small apartment which they thought they could easily afford for the day or two they need spend in looking up a furnished flat. They were used to staying at this hotel when they came on for a little outing in New York, after some rigid winter in Boston, at the time of the spring exhibitions. They were remembered there from year to year; the coloured call-boys, who never seemed to get any older, smiled upon them, and the clerk called March by name even before he registered. He asked if Mrs. March were with him, and said then he supposed they would want their usual quarters; and in a moment they were domesticated in a far interior that seemed to have been waiting for them in a clean, quiet, patient disoccupation ever since they left it two years before. The little parlour, with its gilt paper and ebonised furniture, was the lightest of the rooms, but it was not very light at noonday without the gas, which the bell-boy now flared up for them. The uproar of the city came to it in a soothing murmur, and they took possession of its peace and comfort with open celebration. After all,

they agreed, there *was* no place in the world so delightful as a hotel apartment like that; the boasted charms of home were nothing to it; and then the magic of its being always there, ready for any one, every one, just as if it were for some one alone: it was like the experience of an Arabian Nights hero come true for all the race.

"Oh, *why* can't we always stay here, just we two!" Mrs. March sighed to her husband, as he came out of his room rubbing his face red with the towel, while she studied a new arrangement of her bonnet and hand-bag on the mantel.

"And ignore the past? I'm willing. I've no doubt that the children could get on perfectly well without us, and could find some lot in the scheme of Providence that would really be just as well for them."

"Yes; or could contrive somehow never to have existed. I should insist upon that. If they *are*, don't you see that we couldn't wish them *not to be*?"

"Oh yes; I see your point; it's simply incontrovertible."

She laughed, and said: "Well, at any rate, if we can't find a flat to suit us we can all crowd into these three rooms somehow, for the winter, and then browse about for meals. By the week we could get them much cheaper; and we could save on the eating, as they do in Europe. Or on something else."

"Something else, probably," said March. "But we won't take this apartment till the ideal furnished

flat winks out altogether. We shall not have any trouble. We can easily find some one who is going South for the winter, and will be glad to give up their flat 'to the right party' at a nominal rent. That's my notion. That's what the Evanses did one winter when they came on here in February. All but the nominality of the rent."

"Yes, and we could pay a very good rent and still save something on letting our house. You can settle yourselves in a hundred different ways in New York, that is one merit of the place. But if everything else fails, we can come back to this. I want you to take the refusal of it, Basil. And we'll commence looking this very evening as soon as we've had dinner. I cut a lot of things out of the *Herald* as we came on. See here!"

She took a long strip of paper out of her hand-bag with minute advertisements pinned transversely upon it, and forming the effect of some glittering nondescript vertebrate.

"Looks something like the sea-serpent," said March, drying his hands on the towel, while he glanced up and down the list. "But we shan't have any trouble. I've no doubt there are half a dozen things there that will do. You haven't gone up-town? Because we must be near the *Every Other Week* office."

"No; but I *wish* Mr. Fulkerson hadn't called it that! It always makes one think of 'jam yesterday and jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day,' in *Through the Looking-glass*. They're all in this region."

They were still at their table, beside a low window, where some sort of never-blooming shrub symmetrically balanced itself in a large pot, with a leaf to the right and a leaf to the left and a spear up the middle, when Fulkerson came stepping square-footedly over the thick dining-room carpet. He wagged in the air a gay hand of salutation at sight of them, and of repression when they offered to rise to meet him; then, with an apparent simultaneity of action he gave a hand to each, pulled up a chair from the next table, put his hat and stick on the floor beside it, and seated himself.

"Well, you've burnt your ships behind you, sure enough," he said, beaming his satisfaction upon them from eyes and teeth.

"The ships are burnt," said March, "though I'm not sure we did it alone. But here we are, looking for shelter, and a little anxious about the disposition of the natives."

"Oh, they're an awful peaceable lot," said Fulkerson. "I've been round amongst the caciques a little, and I think I've got two or three places that will just suit you, Mrs. March. How did you leave the children?"

"Oh, how kind of you! Very well, and very proud to be left in charge of the smoking wrecks."

Fulkerson naturally paid no attention to what she said, being but secondarily interested in the children at the best. "Here are some things right in this neighbourhood, within gunshot of the office, and if you want you can go and look at them to-

night; the agents gave me houses where the people would be in."

"We will go and look at them instantly," said Mrs. March. "Or, as soon as you've had coffee with us."

"Never do," Fulkerson replied. He gathered up his hat and stick. "Just rushed in to say Hello, and got to run right away again. I tell you, March, things are humming. I'm after those fellows with a sharp stick all the while to keep them from loafing on my house, and at the same time I'm just bubbling over with ideas about *The Lone Hand*—wish we *could* call it that!—that I want to talk up with you."

"Well, come to breakfast," said Mrs. March cordially.

"No; the ideas will keep till you've secured your lodge in this vast wilderness. Good-bye."

"You're as nice as you can be, Mr. Fulkerson," she said, "to keep us in mind when you have so much to occupy you."

"I wouldn't have *anything* to occupy me if I *hadn't* kept you in mind, Mrs. March," said Fulkerson, going off upon as good a speech as he could apparently hope to make.

"Why, Basil," said Mrs. March, when he was gone, "he's charming! But now we mustn't lose an instant. Let's see where the places are." She ran over the half-dozen agents' permits. "Capital—first-rate—the very thing—every one. Well, I consider ourselves settled! We can go back to the children to-morrow if we like, though I rather think

I should like to stay over another day and get a little rested for the final pulling up that's got to come. But this simplifies everything enormously, and Mr. Fulkerson is as thoughtful and as sweet as he can be. I know you will get on well with him. He has such a good heart. And his attitude toward you, Basil, is beautiful always—so respectful; or not that so much as appreciative. Yes, appreciative—that's the word; I must always keep that in mind."

"It's quite important to do so," said March.

"Yes," she assented seriously, "and we must not forget just what kind of flat we are going to look for. The *sine qua nons* are an elevator and steam-heat, not above the third floor, to begin with. Then we must each have a room, and you must have your study and I must have my parlour; and the two girls must each have a room. With the kitchen and dining-room, how many does that make?"

"Ten."

"I thought eight. Well, no matter. You can work in the parlour, and run into your bedroom when anybody comes; and I can sit in mine, and the girls must put up with one, if it's large and sunny, though I've always given them two at home. And the kitchen must be sunny, so they can sit in it. And the rooms must *all* have outside light. And the rent must not be over eight hundred for the winter. We only get a thousand for our whole house, and we *must* save something out of that, so as to cover the expenses of moving. Now, do you think you can remember all that?"

"Not the half of it," said March. "But *you* can;

or if you forget a third of it, I can come in with my partial half, and more than make it up."

She had brought her bonnet and sack downstairs with her, and was transferring them from the hat-rack to her person while she talked. The friendly door-boy let them into the street, and the clear October evening air inspirited her so, that as she tucked her hand under her husband's arm and began to pull him along, she said, "If we find something right away—and we're just as likely to get the right flat soon as late; it's all a lottery—we'll go to the theatre somewhere."

She had a moment's panic about having left the agents' permits on the table, and after remembering that she had put them into her little shopping-bag, where she kept her money (each note crushed into a round wad), and had left that on the hat-rack, where it would certainly be stolen, she found it on her wrist. She did not think that very funny, but after a first impulse to inculcate her husband, she let him laugh, while they stopped under a lamp, and she held the permits half a yard away to read the numbers on them.

"Where are your glasses, Isabel?"

"On the mantel in our room, of course."

"Then you ought to have brought a pair of tongs."

"I wouldn't get off second-hand jokes, Basil," she said; and "Why, here!" she cried, whirling round to the door before which they had halted, "this is the very number. Well, I do believe it's a sign!"

One of those coloured men who soften the trade of

janitor in many of the smaller apartment houses in New York by the sweetness of their race, let the Marches in, or, rather, welcomed them to the possession of the premises by the bow with which he acknowledged their permit. It was a large, old mansion cut up into five or six dwellings, but it had kept some traits of its former dignity, which pleased people of their sympathetic tastes. The dark mahogany trim, of sufficiently ugly design, gave a rich gloom to the hallway, which was wide, and paved with marble; the carpeted stairs curved aloft through a generous space.

"There is no elevator?" Mrs. March asked of the janitor.

He answered, "No, ma'am; only two flights up," so winningly that she said—

"Oh!" in courteous apology, and whispered her husband as she followed lightly up, "We'll take it, Basil, if it's like the rest."

"If it's like him, you mean."

"I don't wonder they wanted to own them," she hurriedly philosophised. "If I had such a creature, nothing but death should part us, and I should no more think of giving him his *freedom*!"

"No; we couldn't afford it," returned her husband.

The apartment the janitor unlocked for them, and lit up from those chandeliers and brackets of gilt brass in the form of vine bunches, leaves, and tendrils in which the early gas-fitter realised most of his conceptions of beauty, had rather more of the ugliness than the dignity of the hall. But the rooms were

large, and they grouped themselves in a reminiscence of the time when they were part of a dwelling, that had its charm, its pathos, its impressiveness. Where they were cut up into smaller spaces, it had been done with the frankness with which a proud old family of fallen fortunes practises its economies. The rough pine floors showed a black border of tack-heads where carpets had been lifted and put down for generations; the white paint was yellow with age; the apartment had light at the front and at the back, and two or three rooms had glimpses of the day through small windows let into their corners; another one seemed lifting an appealing eye to heaven through a glass circle in its ceiling; the rest must darkle in perpetual twilight. Yet something pleased in it all, and Mrs. March had gone far to adapt the different rooms to the members of her family, when she suddenly thought (and for her to think was to say), "Why, but there's no steam-heat!"

"No, ma'am," the janitor admitted, "But dere's grates in most o' de rooms, and dere's furnace-heat in de halls."

"That's true," she admitted, and having placed her family in the apartments, it was hard to get them out again. "Could we manage?" she referred to her husband.

"Why, *I* shouldn't care for the steam-heat if—— What is the rent?" he broke off to ask the janitor.

"Nine hundred, sir."

March concluded to his wife, "If it were furnished.

"Why, of course! What could I have been thinking of? We're looking for a furnished flat," she explained to the janitor, "and this was so pleasant and home-like, that I never thought whether it was furnished or not."

She smiled upon the janitor, and he entered into the joke and chuckled so amiably at her flattering oversight on the way downstairs that she said, as she pinched her husband's arm, "Now, if you don't give him a quarter, I'll never speak to you again, Basil!"

"I would have given half a dollar willingly to get you beyond his glamour," said March, when they were safely on the pavement outside. "If it hadn't been for my strength of character, you'd have taken an unfurnished flat without heat and with no elevator, at nine hundred a year, when you had just sworn me to steam-heat, an elevator, furniture, and eight hundred."

"Yes! How could I have lost my head so completely?" she said, with a lenient amusement in her aberration which she was not always able to feel in her husband's.

"The next time a coloured janitor opens the door to us, I'll tell him the apartment doesn't suit at the threshold. It's the only way to manage you, Isabel."

"It's true. I *am* in love with the whole race. I never saw one of them that didn't have perfectly angelic manners. I think we shall all be black in heaven—that is, black-souled."

"That isn't the usual theory," said March.

"Well, perhaps not," she assented. "Where are we going now? Oh yes, to the Xenophon!"

She pulled him gaily along again, and after they had walked a block down and half a block over, they stood before the apartment-house of that name, which was cut on the gas lamps on either side of the heavily spiked, æsthetic-hinged black door. The titter of an electric bell brought a large, fat Buttons, with a stage effect of being dressed to look small, who said he would call the janitor, and they waited in the dimly splendid, copper-coloured interior, admiring the whorls and waves into which the wall-paint was combed, till the janitor came in his gold-banded cap, like a continental *portier*. When they said they would like to see Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment he owned his inability to cope with the affair, and said he must send for the Superintendent; he was either in the Herodotus or the Thucydides, and would be there in a minute. The Buttons brought him—a Yankee of browbeating presence in plain clothes—almost before they had time to exchange a frightened whisper in recognition of the fact that there could be no doubt of the steam-heat and elevator in this case. Half stifled in the one, they mounted in the other eight stories, while they tried to keep their self-respect under the gaze of the Superintendent, which they felt was classing and assessing them with unfriendly accuracy. They could not, and they faltered abashed at the threshold of Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, while the Superintendent lit the gas in the gangway that he

called a private hall, and in the drawing-room and the succession of chambers stretching rearward to the kitchen. Everything had been done by the architect to save space, and everything to waste it by Mrs. Grosvenor Green. She had conformed to a law for the necessity of turning round in each room, and had folding-beds in the chambers ; but there her subordination had ended, and wherever you might have turned round she had put a gimcrack so that you would knock it over if you did turn. The place was rather pretty and even imposing at first glance, and it took several joint ballots for March and his wife to make sure that with the kitchen there were only six rooms. At every door hung a portière from large rings on a brass rod ; every shelf and dressing-case and mantel was littered with gimcracks, and the corners of the tiny rooms were curtained off, and behind these portières swarmed more gimcracks. The front of the upright piano had what March called a short-skirted portière on it, and the top was covered with vases, with dragon candlesticks, and with Jap fans, which also expanded themselves bat-wise on the walls between the etchings and the water-colours. The floors were covered with filling, and then rugs, and then skins ; the easy-chairs all had tidies, Armenian and Turkish and Persian ; the lounges and sofas had embroidered cushions hidden under tidies. The radiator was concealed by a Jap screen, and over the top of this some Arab scarfs were flung. There was a superabundance of clocks. China pugs guarded the

hearth ; a brass sunflower smiled from the top of either andiron, and a brass peacock spread its tail before them inside a high filigree fender ; on one side was a coal-hod in *repoussé* brass, and on the other a wrought-iron wood-basket. Some red Japanese bird-kites were stuck about in the necks of spelter vases, a crimson Jap umbrella hung opened beneath the chandelier, and each globe had a shade of yellow silk.

March, when he had recovered his self-command a little in the presence of the agglomeration, comforted himself by calling the bric-à-brac Jamescracks, as if this was their full name.

The disrespect he was able to show the whole apartment by means of this joke strengthened him to say boldly to the Superintendent that it was altogether too small ; then he asked carelessly what the rent was.

“Two hundred and fifty.”

The Marches gave a start, and looked at each other.

“Don’t you think we could make it do ?” she asked him, and he could see that she had mentally saved five hundred dollars as the difference between the rent of their house and that of this flat. “It has some very pretty features, and we could manage to squeeze in, couldn’t we ?”

“You won’t find another furnished flat like it for no two fifty a month in the whole city,” the Superintendent put in.

They exchanged glances again, and March said carelessly, “It’s too small.”

"There's a vacant flat in the Herodotus for eighteen hundred a year, and one in the Thucydides for fifteen," the Superintendent suggested, clicking his keys together as they sank down in the elevator; "seven rooms and a bath."

"Thank you," said March, "we're looking for a furnished flat."

They felt that the Superintendent parted from them with repressed sarcasm.

"O Basil, do you think we *really* made him think it was the smallness and not the dearness?"

"No, but we saved our self-respect in the attempt; and that's a great deal."

"Of course, I *wouldn't* have taken it, anyway, with only six rooms, and so high up. But what prices! Now, we must be very circumspect about the next place."

It was a janitress, large, fat, with her arms wound up in her apron, who received them there. Mrs. March gave her a succinct but perfect statement of their needs. She failed to grasp the nature of them, or feigned to do so. She shook her head, and said that her son would show them the flat. There was a radiator visible in the narrow hall, and Isabel tacitly compromised on steam-heat without an elevator, as the flat was only one flight up. When the son appeared from below with a small kerosene hand-lamp, it appeared that the flat was unfurnished, but there was no stopping him till he had shown it in all its impossibility. When they got safely away from it and into the street March said,

"Well, have you had enough for to-night, Isabel? Shall we go to the theatre now?"

"Not on any account. I want to see the whole list of flats that Mr. Fulkerson thought would be the very thing for us." She laughed, but with a certain bitterness.

"You'll be calling him my Mr. Fulkerson next, Isabel."

"Oh no!"

The fourth address was a furnished flat without a kitchen, in a house with a general restaurant. The fifth was a furnished house. At the sixth a pathetic widow and her pretty daughter wanted to take a family to board, and would give them a private table at a rate which the Marches would have thought low in Boston.

Mrs. March came away tingling with compassion for their evident anxiety, and this pity naturally soured into a sense of injury. "Well, I must say I have completely lost confidence in Mr. Fulkerson's judgment. Anything more utterly different from what I told him we wanted I couldn't imagine. If he doesn't manage any better about his business than he has done about this, it will be a perfect failure."

"Well, well, let's hope he'll be more circumspect about that," her husband returned, with ironical propitiation. "But I don't think it's Fulkerson's fault altogether. Perhaps it's the house-agents'. They're a very illusory generation. There seems to be something in the human habitation that cor-

rupts the natures of those who deal in it, to buy or sell it, to hire or let it. You go to an agent and tell him what kind of a house you want. He has no such house, and he sends you to look at something altogether different, upon the well-ascertained principle that if you can't get what you want, you will take what you can get. You don't suppose the 'party' that took our house in Boston was looking for any such house? He was looking for a totally different kind of house in another part of the town."

"I don't believe that!" his wife broke in.

"Well, no matter. But see what a scandalous rent you asked for it."

"We didn't get much more than half; and, besides, the agent told me to ask fourteen hundred."

"Oh, I'm not blaming you, Isabel. I'm only analysing the house-agent, and exonerating Fulker-son."

"Well, I don't believe he told them just what we wanted; and at any rate, I'm done with agents. To-morrow, I'm going entirely by advertisements."

## VIII.

MRS. MARCH took the vertebrate with her to the Vienna Coffee-house, where they went to breakfast next morning. She made March buy her the *Herald* and the *World*, and she added to its spiny convolutions from them. She read the new advertisements aloud with ardour and with faith to believe that the apartments described in them were every one truthfully represented, and that any one of them was richly responsive to their needs. "Elegant, light, large, single, and outside flats" were offered with "all improvements—bath, ice-box, etc."—for \$25 and \$30 a month. The cheapness was amazing. The Wagram, the Esmeralda, the Jacinth, advertised them for \$40 and \$60, "with steam-heat and elevator," rent free till November. Others, attractive from their air of conscientious scruple, announced "first-class flats; good order; reasonable rents." The Helena asked the reader if she had seen the "cabinet finish, hard-wood floors, and frescoed ceilings" of its \$50 flats; the Asteroid affirmed that such apartments, with "six light rooms and bath, porcelain wash-tubs, electric bells, and hall-boy," as it offered for \$75 were unapproached by competition. There

was a sameness in the jargon which tended to confusion. Mrs. March got several flats on her list which promised neither steam-heat nor elevators; she forgot herself so far as to include two or three as remote from the down-town region of her choice as Harlem. But after she had rejected these the nondescript vertebrate was still voluminous enough to sustain her buoyant hopes.

The waiter, who remembered them from year to year, had put them at a window giving a pretty good section of Broadway, and before they set out on their search they had a moment of reminiscence. They recalled the Broadway of five, of ten, of twenty years ago, swelling and roaring with a tide of gaily painted omnibuses and of picturesque traffic that the horse-cars have now banished from it. The grind of their wheels and the clash of their harsh bells imperfectly fill the silence that the omnibuses have left, and the eye misses the tumultuous perspective of former times.

They went out and stood for a moment before Grace Church, and looked down the stately thoroughfare, and found it no longer impressive, no longer characteristic. It is still Broadway in name, but now it is like any other street. You do not now take your life in your hand when you attempt to cross it; the Broadway policeman who supported the elbow of timorous beauty in the hollow of his cotton-gloved palm and guided its little fearful boots over the crossing, while he arrested the billowy omnibuses on either side with an imperious glance, is gone, and all

that certain processional, barbaric gaiety of the place is gone.

"Palmyra, Baalbec, Timour of the Desert," said March, voicing their common feeling of the change.

They turned and went into the beautiful church, and found themselves in time for the matin service. Rapt far from New York, if not from earth, in the dim richness of the painted light, the hallowed music took them with solemn ecstasy; the aërial, aspiring Gothic forms seemed to lift them heavenward. They came out, reluctant, into the dazzle and bustle of the street, with a feeling that they were too good for it, which they confessed to each other with whimsical consciousness.

"But no matter how consecrated we feel now," he said, "we mustn't forget that we went into the church for precisely the same reason that we went to the Vienna Café for breakfast—to gratify an æsthetic sense, to renew the faded pleasure of travel for a moment, to get back into the Europe of our youth. It was a purely Pagan impulse, Isabel, and we'd better own it."

"I don't know," she returned. "I think we reduce ourselves to the bare bones too much. I wish we didn't always recognise the facts as we do. Sometimes I should like to blink them. I should like to think I was devouter than I am, and younger and prettier."

"Better not; you couldn't keep it up. Honesty is the best policy even in such things."

"No; I don't like it, Basil. I should rather wait

till the last day for some of my motives to come to the top. I know they're always mixed, but do let me give them the benefit of a doubt sometimes."

"Well, well, have it your own way, my dear. But I prefer not to lay up so many disagreeable surprises for myself at that time."

She would not consent. "I know I am a good deal younger than I was. I feel quite in the mood of that morning when we walked down Broadway on our wedding journey. Don't you?"

"Oh yes. But I know I'm not younger; I'm only prettier."

She laughed for pleasure in his joke, and also for unconscious joy in the gay New York weather, in which there was no *arrière pensée* of the east wind. They had crossed Broadway, and were walking over to Washington Square, in the region of which they now hoped to place themselves. The *primo tenore* statue of Garibaldi had already taken possession of the place in the name of Latin progress, and they met Italian faces, French faces, Spanish faces, as they strolled over the asphalt walks, under the thinning shadows of the autumn-stricken sycamores. They met the familiar picturesque raggedness of southern Europe with the old kindly illusion that somehow it existed for their appreciation, and that it found adequate compensation for poverty in this. March thought he sufficiently expressed his tacit sympathy in sitting down on one of the iron benches with his wife, and letting a little Neapolitan put a superfluous shine on his boots, while their desultory comment

wandered with equal esteem to the old-fashioned American respectability which keeps the north side of the square in vast mansions of red brick, and the international shabbiness which has invaded the southern border, and broken it up into lodging-houses, shops, beer gardens, and studios.

They noticed the sign of an apartment to let on the north side, and as soon as the little boot-black could be bought off they went over to look at it. The janitor met them at the door and examined them. Then he said, as if still in doubt, "It has ten rooms, and the rent is twenty-eight hundred dollars."

"It wouldn't do, then," March replied, and left him to divide the responsibility between the paucity of the rooms and the enormity of the rent as he best might. But their self-love had received a wound, and they questioned each other what it was in their appearance made him doubt their ability to pay so much.

"Of course we don't look like New-Yorkers," sighed Mrs. March, "and we've walked through the Square. That might be as if we had walked along the Park Street mall in the Common before we came out on Beacon. Do you suppose he could have seen you getting your boots blacked in that way?"

"It's useless to ask," said March. "But I never can recover from this blow."

"Oh pshaw! You know you hate such things as badly as I do. It was very impertinent of him."

"Let us go back, and *écraser l'infâme* by paying him a year's rent in advance and taking immediate possession. Nothing else can soothe my wounded feelings. *You* were not having your boots blacked : why shouldn't he have supposed you were a New-Yorker, and I a country cousin ?"

"They always know. Don't you remember Mrs. Williams's going to a Fifth Avenue milliner in a Worth dress, and the woman's asking her instantly what hotel she should send her hat to ?"

"Yes ; these things drive one to despair. I don't wonder the bodies of so many genteel strangers are found in the waters around New York. Shall we try the south side, my dear ? or had we better go back to our rooms and rest a while ?"

Mrs. March had out the vertebrate, and was consulting one of its glittering ribs, and glancing up from it at a house before which they stood. "Yes, it's the number ; but do they call *this* being ready October 1st ?" The little area in front of the basement was heaped with a mixture of mortar, bricks, laths, and shavings from the interior ; the brown-stone steps to the front door were similarly bestrewn ; the doorway showed the half-open rough pine carpenter's hatch of an unfinished house ; the sashless windows of every story showed the activity of workmen within ; the clatter of hammers and the hiss of saws came out to them from every opening.

"They may call it October 1st," said March, "because it's too late to contradict them. But they'd

better not call it December 1st in *my* presence ; I'll let them say January 1st, at a pinch."

"We will go in and look at it anyway," said his wife ; and he admired how, when she was once within, she began provisionally to settle the family in each of the several floors with the female instinct for domiciliation which never failed her. She had the help of the landlord, who was present to urge forward the workmen apparently ; he lent a hopeful fancy to the solution of all her questions. To get her from under his influence March had to represent that the place was damp from undried plastering, and that if she stayed she would probably be down with that New York pneumonia which visiting Bostonians are always dying of. Once safely on the pavement outside, she realised that the apartment was not only unfinished, but unfurnished, and had neither steam-heat nor elevator. "But I thought we had better look at everything," she explained.

"Yes, but not take everything. If I hadn't pulled you away from there by main force you'd have not only died of New York pneumonia on the spot, but you'd have had us all settled there before we knew what we were about."

"Well, that's what I can't help, Basil. It's the only way I can realise whether it will do for us. I have to dramatise the whole thing."

She got a deal of pleasure as well as excitement out of this, and he had to own that the process of setting up house-keeping in so many different places was not only entertaining, but tended, through as-

sociation with their first beginnings in house-keeping, to restore the image of their early married days, and to make them young again.

It went on all day, and continued far into the night, until it was too late to go to the theatre, too late to do anything but tumble into bed and simultaneously fall on sleep. They groaned over their reiterated disappointments, but they could not deny that the interest was unfailing, and that they got a great deal of fun out of it all. Nothing could abate Mrs. March's faith in her advertisements. One of them sent her to a flat of ten rooms which promised to be the solution of all their difficulties; it proved to be over a livery-stable, a liquor store, and a milliner's shop, none of the first fashion. Another led them far into old Greenwich Village to an apartment-house, which she refused to enter behind a small girl with a loaf of bread under one arm and a quart can of milk under the other.

In their search they were obliged, as March complained, to the acquisition of useless information in a degree unequalled in their experience. They came to excel in the sad knowledge of the line at which respectability distinguishes itself from shabbiness. Flattering advertisements took them to numbers of huge apartment-houses chiefly distinguishable from tenement-houses by the absence of fire-escapes on their façades, till Mrs. March refused to stop at any door where there were more than six bell-ratchets and speaking-tubes on either hand. Before the middle of the afternoon she decided against

ratchets altogether, and confined herself to knobs, neatly set in the door-trim. Her husband was still sunk in the superstition that you can live anywhere you like in New York, and he would have paused at some places where her quicker eye caught the fatal sign of "Modes" in the ground-floor windows. She found that there was an east and west line beyond which they could not go if they wished to keep their self-respect, and that within the region to which they had restricted themselves there was a choice of streets. At first all the New York streets looked to them ill-paved, dirty, and repulsive; the general infamy imparted itself in their casual impression to streets in no wise guilty. But they began to notice that some streets were quiet and clean, and, though never so quiet and clean as Boston streets, that they wore an air of encouraging reform, and suggested a future of greater and greater domesticity. Whole blocks of these down-town cross streets seemed to have been redeemed from decay, and even in the midst of squalor a dwelling here and there had been seized, painted a dull-red as to its brick-work, and a glossy black as to its wood-work, and with a bright brass bell-pull and door knob and a large brass plate for its key-hole escutcheon, had been endowed with an effect of purity and pride which removed its shabby neighbourhood far from it.

Some of these houses were quite small, and imaginably within their means; but, as March said, somebody seemed always to be living there himself, and the fact that none of them were to rent kept

Mrs. March true to her ideal of a flat. Nothing prevented its realisation so much as its difference from the New York ideal of a flat, which was inflexibly seven rooms and a bath. One or two rooms might be at the front, the rest crooked and cornered backward through increasing and then decreasing darkness till they reached a light bedroom or kitchen at the rear. It might be the one or the other, but it was always the seventh room with the bath; or if, as sometimes happened, it was the eighth, it was so after having counted the bath as one. In this case the janitor said you always counted the bath as one. If the flats were advertised as having "all light rooms," he explained that any room with a window giving into the open air of a court or shaft was counted a light room.

The Marches tried to make out why it was that these flats were so much more repulsive than the apartments which every one lived in abroad; but they could only do so upon the supposition that in their European days they were too young, too happy, too full of the future, to notice whether rooms were inside or outside, light or dark, big or little, high or low. "Now we're imprisoned in the present," he said, "and we have to make the worst of it."

In their despair he had an inspiration, which she declared worthy of him: it was to take two small flats, of four or five rooms and a bath, and live in both. They tried this in a great many places; but they never could get two flats of the kind on the

same floor where there was steam-heat and an elevator. At one place they almost did it. They had resigned themselves to the humility of the neighbourhood, to the prevalence of modistes and livery-stablemen (they seem to consort much in New York), to the garbage in the gutters and the litter of paper in the streets, to the faltering slats in the surrounding window-shutters and the crumbled brown-stone steps and sills, when it turned out that one of the apartments had been taken between two visits they made. Then the only combination left open to them was of a ground-floor flat to the right and a third-floor flat to the left.

Still they kept this inspiration in reserve for use at the first opportunity. In the meantime there were several flats which they thought they could almost make do : notably one where they could get an extra servant's room in the basement four flights down, and another where they could get it in the roof five flights up. At the first the janitor was respectful and enthusiastic ; at the second he had an effect of ironical pessimism. When they trembled on the verge of taking his apartment, he pointed out a spot in the kalsomining of the parlour ceiling, and gratuitously said, Now such a thing as that he should not agree to put in shape unless they took the apartment for a term of years. The apartment was unfurnished, and they recurred to the fact that they wanted a furnished apartment, and made their escape. This saved them in several other extremities ; but short of extremity they could not keep their different

requirements in mind, and were always about to decide without regard to some one of them.

They went to several places twice without intending: once to that old-fashioned house with the pleasant coloured janitor, and wandered all over the apartment again with a haunting sense of familiarity, and then recognised the janitor and laughed; and to that house with the pathetic widow and the pretty daughter who wished to take them to board. They stayed to excuse their blunder, and easily came by the fact that the mother had taken the house that the girl might have a home while she was in New York studying art, and they hoped to pay their way by taking boarders. Her daughter was at her class now, the mother concluded; and they encouraged her to believe that it could only be a few days till the rest of her scheme was realised.

"I dare say we could be perfectly comfortable there," March suggested when they had got away. "Now if we were truly humane we would modify our desires to meet their needs and end this sickening search, wouldn't we?"

"Yes, but we're *not* truly humane," his wife answered, "or at least not in that sense. You know you hate boarding; and if we went there I should have them on my sympathies the whole time."

"I see. And then you would take it out of me."

"Then I should take it out of you. And if you are going to be so weak, Basil, and let every little thing work upon you in that way, you'd better not

come to New York. You'll see enough misery here."

"Well, don't take that superior tone with me, as if I were a child that had its mind set on an undesirable toy, Isabel."

"Ah, don't you suppose it's because you *are* such a child in some respects that I like you, dear?" she demanded, without relenting.

"But I don't find so much misery in New York. I don't suppose there's any more suffering here to the population than there is in the country. And they're so gay about it all. I think the outward aspect of the place and the hilarity of the sky and air must get into the people's blood. The weather is simply unapproachable; and I don't care if it is the ugliest place in the world, as you say. I suppose it is. It shrieks and yells with ugliness here and there, but it never loses its spirits. That widow is from the country. When she's been a year in New York she'll be as gay—as gay as an L road." He celebrated a satisfaction they both had in the L roads. "They kill the streets and avenues, but at least they partially hide them, and that is some comfort; and they do triumph over their prostrate forms with a savage exultation that is intoxicating. Those bends in the L that you get in the corner of Washington Square, or just below the Cooper Institute—they're the gayest things in the world. Perfectly atrocious, of course, but incomparably picturesque! And the whole city is so," said March, "or else the L would never have got

built here. New York may be splendidly gay or squalidly gay; but, prince or pauper, it's gay always."

"Yes, gay is the word," she admitted, with a sigh. "But frantic. I can't get used to it. They forget death, Basil; they forget death in New York."

"Well, I don't know that I've ever found much advantage in remembering it."

"Don't say such a thing, dearest."

He could see that she had got to the end of her nervous strength for the present, and he proposed that they should take the Elevated road as far as it would carry them into the country, and shake off their nightmare of flat-hunting for an hour or two; but her conscience would not let her. She convicted him of levity equal to that of the New-Yorkers in proposing such a thing; and they dragged through the day. She was too tired to care for dinner, and in the night she had a dream from which she woke herself with a cry that roused him too. It was something about the children at first, whom they had talked of wistfully before falling asleep, and then it was of a hideous thing with two square eyes and a series of sections growing darker and then lighter, till the tail of the monstrous articulate was quite luminous again. She shuddered at the vague description she was able to give; but he asked, "Did it offer to bite you?"

"No. That was the most frightful thing about it; it had no mouth."

March laughed. "Why, my dear, it was nothing but a harmless New York flat—seven rooms and a bath."

"I really believe it was," she consented, recognising an architectural resemblance, and she fell asleep again, and woke renewed for the work before them.

## IX.

THEIR house-hunting no longer had novelty, but it still had interest; and they varied their day by taking a coupé, by renouncing advertisements, and by reverting to agents. Some of these induced them to consider the idea of furnished houses; and Mrs. March learned tolerance for Fulkerson by accepting permits to visit flats and houses which had none of the qualifications she desired in either, and were as far beyond her means as they were out of the region to which she had geographically restricted herself. They looked at three-thousand and four-thousand dollar apartments, and rejected them for one reason or another which had nothing to do with the rent; the higher the rent was, the more critical they were of the slippery inlaid floors and the arrangement of the richly decorated rooms. They never knew whether they had deceived the janitor or not; as they came in a coupé, they hoped they had.

They drove accidentally through one street that seemed gayer in the perspective than an L road. The fire-escapes, with their light iron balconies and ladders of iron, decorated the lofty house fronts; the roadway and sidewalks and door-steps swarmed

with children; women's heads seemed to show at every window. In the basements, over which flights of high stone steps led to the tenements, were green-grocers' shops abounding in cabbages, and provision stores running chiefly to bacon and sausages, and cobblers' and tinners' shops, and the like, in proportion to the small needs of a poor neighbourhood. Ash barrels lined the sidewalks, and garbage heaps filled the gutters; teams of all trades stood idly about; a peddler of cheap fruit urged his cart through the street, and mixed his cry with the joyous screams and shouts of the children and the scolding and gossiping voices of the women; the burly blue bulk of a policeman defined itself at the corner; a drunkard zigzagged down the sidewalk toward him. It was not the abode of the extremest poverty, but of a poverty as hopeless as any in the world, transmitting itself from generation to generation, and establishing conditions of permanency to which human life adjusts itself as it does to those of some incurable disease, like leprosy.

The time had been when the Marches would have taken a purely æsthetic view of the facts as they glimpsed them in this street of tenement-houses; when they would have contented themselves with saying that it was as picturesque as a street in Naples or Florence, and with wondering why nobody came to paint it; they would have thought they were sufficiently serious about it in blaming the artists for their failure to appreciate it, and going abroad for the picturesque when they had it here

under their noses. It was to the nose that the street made one of its strongest appeals, and Mrs. March pulled up her window of the coupé. "Why does he take us through such a disgusting street?" she demanded, with an exasperation of which her husband divined the origin.

"This driver may be a philanthropist in disguise," he answered, with dreamy irony, "and may want us to think about the people who are not merely carried through this street in a coupé, but have to spend their whole lives in it, winter and summer, with no hopes of driving out of it, except in a hearse. I must say they don't seem to mind it. I haven't seen a jollier crowd anywhere in New York. They seem to have forgotten death a little more completely than any of their fellow-citizens, Isabel. And I wonder what they think of us, making this gorgeous progress through their midst. I suppose they think we're rich, and hate us—if they hate rich people; they don't look as if they hated anybody. Should we be as patient as they are with their discomfort? I don't believe there's steam-heat or an elevator in the whole block. Seven rooms and a bath would be more than the largest and genteelest family would know what to do with. They wouldn't know what to do with the bath anyway."

His monologue seemed to interest his wife apart from the satirical point it had for themselves. "You ought to get Mr. Fulkerson to let you work some of these New York sights up for *Every Other Week*, Basil; you could do them very nicely."

"Yes ; I've thought of that. But don't let's leave the personal ground. Doesn't it make you feel rather small and otherwise unworthy when you see the kind of street these fellow-beings of yours live in, and then think how particular you are about locality and the number of bell-pulls ? I don't see even ratchets and speaking-tubes at these doors." He craned his neck out of the window for a better look, and the children of discomfort cheered him, out of sheer good feeling and high spirits. "I didn't know I was so popular. Perhaps it's a recognition of my humane sentiments."

"Oh, it's very easy to have humane sentiments, and to satirise ourselves for wanting eight rooms and a bath in a good neighbourhood, when we see how these wretched creatures live," said his wife. "But if we shared all we have with them, and then settled down among them, what good would it do ?"

"Not the least in the world. It might help us for the moment, but it wouldn't keep the wolf from their doors for a week ; and then they would go on just as before, only they wouldn't be on such good terms with the wolf. The only way for them is to keep up an unbroken intimacy with the wolf ; then they can manage him somehow. I don't know how, and I'm afraid I don't want to. Wouldn't you like to have this fellow drive us round among the halls of pride somewhere for a little while ? Fifth Avenue or Madison, up-town ?"

"No ; we've no time to waste. I've got a place near Third Avenue, on a nice cross street, and I

want him to take us there." It proved that she had several addresses near together, and it seemed best to dismiss their coupé and do the rest of their afternoon's work on foot. It came to nothing; she was not humbled in the least by what she had seen in the tenement-house street; she yielded no point in her ideal of a flat, and the flats persistently refused to lend themselves to it. She lost all patience with them.

"Oh, I don't say the flats are in the right of it," said her husband, when she denounced their stupid inadequacy to the purposes of a Christian home. "But I'm not so sure that we are either. I've been thinking about that home business ever since my sensibilities were dragged—in a coupé—through that tenement-house street. Of course no child born and brought up in such a place as that could have any conception of home. But that's because those poor people can't give character to their habitations. They have to take what they can get. But people like us—that is, of our means—do give character to the average flat. It's made to meet their tastes, or their supposed tastes; and so it's made for social show, not for family life at all. Think of a baby in a flat! It's a contradiction in terms; the flat is the negation of motherhood. The flat means society life; that is, the pretence of social life. It's made to give artificial people a society basis on a little money—too much money, of course, for what they get. So the cost of the building is put into marble halls and idiotic decoration of all kinds. I don't

object to the conveniences, but none of these flats have a living-room. They have drawing-rooms to foster social pretence, and they have dining-rooms and bedrooms; but they have no room where the family can all come together and feel the sweetness of being a family. The bedrooms are black-holes mostly, with a sinful waste of space in each. If it were not for the marble halls, and the decorations, and the foolishly expensive finish, the houses could be built round a court, and the flats could be shaped something like a Pompeian house, with small sleeping closets—only lit from the outside—and the rest of the floor thrown into two or three large cheerful halls, where all the family life could go on, and society could be transacted unpretentiously. Why, those tenements are better and humaner than those flats! There the whole family lives in the kitchen, and has its consciousness of being; but the flat abolishes the family consciousness. It's confinement without coziness; it's cluttered without being snug. You couldn't keep a self-respecting cat in a flat; you couldn't go down cellar to get cider. No: the Anglo-Saxon home, as we know it in the Anglo-Saxon house, is simply impossible in the Franco-American flat, not because it's humble, but because it's false."

"Well, then," said Mrs. March, "let's look at houses."

He had been denouncing the flat in the abstract, and he had not expected this concrete result. But he said, "We will look at houses, then."

## X.

NOTHING mystifies a man more than a woman's aberrations from some point at which he supposes her fixed as a star. In these unfurnished houses, without steam or elevator, March followed his wife about with patient wonder. She rather liked the worst of them best; but she made him go down into the cellars and look at the furnaces; she exacted from him a rigid inquest of the plumbing. She followed him into one of the cellars by the fitful glare of successively lighted matches, and they enjoyed a moment in which the anomaly of their presence there on that errand, so remote from all the facts of their long-established life in Boston, realised itself for them.

"Think how easily we might have been murdered and nobody been any the wiser!" she said when they were comfortably out-doors again.

"Yes, or made way with ourselves in an access of emotional insanity, supposed to have been induced by unavailing flat-hunting," he suggested.

She fell in with the notion. "I'm beginning to *feel* crazy. But I don't want *you* to lose your head, Basil. And I don't want you to sentimentalise any

of the things you see in New York. I think you were disposed to do it in that street we drove through. I don't believe there's any *real* suffering—not real *suffering*—among those people; that is, it would be suffering from our point of view, but they've been used to it all their lives, and they don't feel their discomfort so much."

"Of course I understand that, and I don't propose to sentimentalise them. I think when people get used to a bad state of things they had better stick to it; in fact they don't usually like a better state so well, and I shall keep that firmly in mind."

She laughed with him, and they walked along the L-bestridden avenue, exhilarated by their escape from murder and suicide in that cellar, toward the nearest cross-town track, which they meant to take home to their hotel. "Now to-night we will go to the theatre," she said, "and get this whole house business out of our minds, and be perfectly fresh for a new start in the morning." Suddenly she clutched his arm. "Why, did you *see* that man?" and she signed with her head toward a decently dressed person who walked beside them, next the gutter, stooping over as if to examine it, and half halting at times.

"No. What?"

"Why, I saw him pick up a dirty bit of cracker from the pavement and cram it into his mouth and eat it down as if he were famished. And look! he's actually hunting for more in those garbage heaps!"

This was what the decent-looking man with the

hard hands and broken nails of a workman was doing—like a hungry dog. They kept up with him, in the fascination of the sight, to the next corner, where he turned down the side street still searching the gutter.

They walked on a few paces. Then March said, "I must go after him," and left his wife standing.

"Are you in want—hungry?" he asked the man.

The man said he could not speak English, monsieur.

March asked his question in French.

The man shrugged a pitiful, desperate shrug, "Mais, monsieur——"

March put a coin in his hand, and then suddenly the man's face twisted up; he caught the hand of this alms-giver in both of his, and clung to it. "Monsieur! monsieur!" he gasped, and the tears rained down his face.

His benefactor pulled himself away, shocked and ashamed, as one is by such a chance, and got back to his wife, and the man lapsed back into the mystery of misery out of which he had emerged.

March felt it laid upon him to console his wife for what had happened. "Of course we might live here for years and not see another case like that; and of course there are twenty places where he could have gone for help if he had known where to find them."

"Ah, but it's the possibility of his needing the help so badly as that!" she answered. "That's

what I can't bear, and I shall not come to a place where such things are possible, and we may as well stop our house-hunting here at once."

"Yes? And what part of Christendom will you live in? Such things are possible everywhere in our conditions."

"Then we must change the conditions——"

"Oh no; we must go to the theatre and forget them. We can stop at Brentano's for our tickets as we pass through Union Square."

"I am not going to the theatre, Basil. I am going home to Boston to-night. You can stay and find a flat."

He convinced her of the absurdity of her position, and even of its selfishness; but she said that her mind was quite made up irrespective of what had happened; that she had been away from the children long enough; that she ought to be at home to finish up the work of leaving it. The word brought a sigh. "Ah, I don't know why we should see nothing but sad and ugly things now. When we were young——"

"Younger," he put in. "We're still young."

"That's what we pretend, but we know better. But I was thinking how pretty and pleasant things used to be turning up all the time on our travels in the old days. Why, when we were in New York here on our wedding journey the place didn't seem half so dirty as it does now, and none of these dismal things happened."

"It was a good deal dirtier," he answered; "and I

fancy worse in every way—hungrier, raggeder, more wretchedly housed. But that wasn't the period of life for us to notice it. Don't you remember, when we started to Niagara the last time, how everybody seemed middle-aged and commonplace; and when we got there there were no evident brides; nothing but elderly married people?"

"At least they weren't starving," she rebelled.

"No, you don't starve in parlour cars and first-class hotels; but if you step out of them you run your chance of seeing those who do, if you're getting on pretty well in the forties. If it's the unhappy who see unhappiness, think what misery must be revealed to people who pass their lives in the really squalid tenement-house streets—I don't mean picturesque avenues like that we passed through."

"But we are *not* unhappy," she protested, bringing the talk back to the personal base again, as women must to get any good out of talk. "We're really no unhappier than we were when we were young."

"We're more serious."

"Well, I hate it; and I wish you *wouldn't* be so serious, if that's what it brings us to."

"I will be trivial from this on," said March.

"Shall we go to the *Hole in the Ground* to-night?"

"I am going to Boston."

"It's much the same thing. How do you like that for triviality? It's a little blasphemous, I'll allow."

"It's very silly," she said.

At the hotel they found a letter from the agent

who had sent them the permit to see Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment. He wrote that she had heard they were pleased with her apartment, and that she thought she could make the terms to suit. She had taken her passage for Europe, and was very anxious to let the flat before she sailed. She would call that evening at seven.

"Mrs. Grosvenor Green!" said Mrs. March. "Which of the ten thousand flats is it, Basil?"

"The gimcrackery," he answered. "In the Xenophon, you know."

"Well, she may save herself the trouble. I shall not see her. Or yes—I must. I *couldn't* go away without seeing what sort of creature could have planned that fly-away flat. She must be a perfect——"

"Parachute," March suggested.

"No: anybody so light as that couldn't come down."

"Well, toy balloon."

"Toy balloon will do for the present," Mrs. March admitted. "But I feel that naught but herself can be her parallel for volatility."

When Mrs. Grosvenor Green's card came up they both descended to the hotel parlour, which March said looked like the saloon of a Moorish day-boat; not that he knew of any such craft, but the decorations were so Saracenic and the architecture so Hudson Riverish. They found there on the grand central divan a large lady whose vast smoothness, placidity, and plumpness set at defiance all their preconceptions of Mrs. Grosvenor Green, so that Mrs. March distinctly paused with her card in her hand

before venturing even tentatively to address her. Then she was astonished at the low calm voice in which Mrs. Green acknowledged herself, and slowly proceeded to apologise for calling. It was not quite true that she had taken her passage for Europe, but she hoped soon to do so, and she confessed that in the meantime she was anxious to let her flat. She was a little worn out with the care of house-keeping—Mrs. March breathed, “Oh yes!” in the sigh with which ladies recognise one another’s martyrdom—and Mr. Green had business abroad, and she was going to pursue her art studies in Paris; she drew in Mr. Ilcomb’s class now, but the instruction was so much better in Paris; and as the Superintendent seemed to think the price was the only objection, she had ventured to call.

“Then we didn’t deceive him in the least,” thought Mrs. March, while she answered sweetly: “No; we were only afraid that it would be too small for our family. We require a good many rooms.” She could not forego the opportunity of saying, “My husband is coming to New York to take charge of a literary periodical, and he will have to have a room to write in,” which made Mrs. Green bow to March, and made March look sheepish. “But we did think the apartment very charming (It *was* architecturally charming,” she protested to her conscience), “and we should have been so glad if we could have got into it.” She followed this with some account of their house-hunting, amid soft murmurs of sympathy from Mrs. Green, who

said that she had been through all that, and that if she could have shown her apartment to them she felt sure that she could have explained it so that they would have seen its capabilities better. Mrs. March assented to this, and Mrs. Green added that if they found nothing exactly suitable she would be glad to have them look at it again; and then Mrs. March said that she was going back to Boston herself, but she was leaving Mr. March to continue the search, and she had no doubt he would be only *too* glad to see the apartment by daylight. "But if you take it, Basil," she warned him, when they were alone, "I shall simply renounce you. I wouldn't live in that junk shop if you gave it to me. But who would have thought she was that kind of looking person? Though of course I might have known if I had stopped to think once. It's because the place doesn't express her at all that it's so unlike her. It couldn't be like anybody, or anything that flies in the air, or creeps upon the earth, or swims in the waters under the earth. I wonder where in the world she's from; she's no New-Yorker; even we can see that; and she's not quite a country person either; she seems like a person from some large town, where she's been an æsthetic authority. And she can't find good enough art instruction in New York, and has to go to Paris for it! Well, it's pathetic, after all, Basil. I can't help feeling sorry for a person who mistakes herself to that extent."

"I can't help feeling sorry for the husband of a person who mistakes herself to that extent. What

is Mr. Grosvenor Green going to do in Paris while she's working her way into the Salon?"

"Well, you keep away from her apartment, Basil; that's all I've got to say to *you*. And yet I do like some things about her."

"I like everything about her but her apartment," said March.

"I like her going to be out of the country," said his wife. "We shouldn't be overlooked. And the place was prettily shaped, you can't deny it. And there was an elevator and steam-heat. And the location is very convenient. And there was a hall-boy to bring up cards. The halls and stairs were kept very clean and nice. But it wouldn't do. I could put you a folding bed in the room where you wrote, and we could even have one in the parlour——"

"Behind a portière? I couldn't stand any more portières!"

"And we could squeeze the two girls into one room, or perhaps only bring Margaret, and put out the whole of the wash. Basil!" she almost shrieked, "it isn't to be thought of!"

He retorted, "I'm not thinking of it, my dear."

Fulkerson came in just before they started for Mrs. March's train, to find out what had become of them, he said, and to see whether they had got anything to live in yet.

"Not a thing," she said. "And I'm just going back to Boston, and leaving Mr. March here to do anything he pleases about it. He has *carte blanche*."

"But freedom brings responsibility, you know,

Fulkerson, and it's the same as if I'd no choice. I'm staying behind because I'm left, not because I expect to do anything."

"Is that so?" asked Fulkerson. "Well, we must see what can be done. I supposed you would be all settled by this time, or I should have humped myself to find you something. None of those places I gave you amount to anything?"

"As much as forty thousand others we've looked at," said Mrs. March. "Yes, one of them *does* amount to something. It comes so near being what we want that I've given Mr. March particular instructions not to go near it."

She told him about Mrs. Grosvenor Green and her flats, and at the end he said—

"Well, well, we must look out for that. I'll keep an eye on him, Mrs. March, and see that he doesn't do anything rash, and I won't leave him till he's found just the right thing. It exists, of course; it must in a city of eighteen hundred thousand people, and the only question is where to find it. You leave him to me, Mrs. March; I'll watch out for him."

Fulkerson showed some signs of going to the station when he found they were not driving, but she bade him a peremptory good-bye at the hotel door.

"He's very nice, Basil, and his way with you is perfectly charming. It's very sweet to see how really fond of you he is. But I didn't want him stringing along up to Forty-second Street with us, and spoiling our last moments together."

At Third Avenue they took the Elevated, for

which she confessed an infatuation. She declared it the most ideal way of getting about in the world, and was not ashamed when he reminded her of how she used to say that nothing under the sun could induce her to travel on it. She now said that the night transit was even more interesting than the day, and that the fleeting intimacy you formed with people in second and third floor interiors, while all the usual street life went on underneath, had a domestic intensity mixed with a perfect repose that was the last effect of good society with all its security and exclusiveness. He said it was better than the theatre, of which it reminded him, to see those people through their windows: a family party of work-folk at a late tea, some of the men in their shirt sleeves; a woman sewing by a lamp; a mother laying her child in its cradle; a man with his head fallen on his hands upon a table; a girl and her lover leaning over the window-sill together. What suggestion! what drama! what infinite interest! At the Forty-second Street station they stopped a minute on the bridge that crosses the track to the branch road for the Central Dépôt, and looked up and down the long stretch of the elevated to north and south. The track that found and lost itself a thousand times in the flare and tremor of the innumerable lights; the moony sheen of the electrics mixing with the reddish points and blots of gas far and near; the architectural shapes of houses and churches and towers, resened by the obscurity from all that was ignoble in them, and the coming and

going of the trains marking the stations with vividder or fainter plumes of flame-shot steam—formed an incomparable perspective. They often talked afterward of the superb spectacle, which in a city full of painters nightly works its unrecorded miracles ; and they were just to the Arachne roof spun in iron over the cross street on which they ran to the depôt ; but for the present they were mostly inarticulate before it. They had another moment of rich silence when they paused in the gallery that leads from the elevated station to the waiting-rooms in the Central Depôt and looked down upon the great night trains lying on the tracks dim under the rain of gas-lights that starred without dispersing the vast darkness of the place. What forces, what fates, slept in these bulks which would soon be hurling themselves north and east and west through the night ! Now they waited there like fabled monsters of Arab story ready for the magician's touch, tractable, reckless, will-less—organised lifelessness full of a strange semblance of life.

The Marches admired the impressive sight with a thrill of patriotic pride in the fact that the whole world perhaps could not afford just the like. Then they hurried down to the ticket offices, and he got her a lower berth in the Boston sleeper, and went with her to the car. They made the most of the fact that her berth was in the very middle of the car ; and she promised to write as soon as she reached home. She promised also that having seen the limitations of New York in respect to flats, she

would not be hard on him if he took something not quite ideal. Only he must remember that it was not to be above Twentieth Street nor below Washington Square ; it must not be higher than the third floor ; it must have an elevator, steam-heat, hall-boys, and a pleasant janitor. These were essentials ; if he could not get them, then they must do without. But he must get them.

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## XI.

MRS. MARCH was one of those wives who exact a more rigid adherence to their ideals from their husbands than from themselves. Early in their married life she had taken charge of him in all matters which she considered practical. She did not include the business of bread-winning in these; that was an affair that might safely be left to his absent-minded, dreamy inefficiency, and she did not interfere with him there. But in such things as rehanging the pictures, deciding on a summer boarding-place, taking a seaside cottage, repapering rooms, choosing seats at the theatre, seeing what the children ate when she was not at table, shutting the cat out at night, keeping run of calls and invitations, and seeing if the furnace was damped, he had failed her so often that she felt she could not leave him the slightest discretion in regard to a flat. Her total distrust of his judgment in the matters cited and others like them consisted with the greatest admiration of his mind and respect for his character. She often said that if he would only bring them to bear in such exigencies he would be simply perfect; but she had long given up his ever doing so. She subjected him, therefore, to

an iron code, but after proclaiming it she was apt to abandon him to the native lawlessness of his temperament. She expected him in this event to do as he pleased, and she resigned herself to it with considerable comfort in holding him accountable. He learned to expect this, and after suffering keenly from her disappointment with whatever he did he waited patiently till she forgot her grievance and began to extract what consolation lurks in the irreparable. She would almost admit at moments that what he had done was a very good thing, but she reserved the right to return in full force to her original condemnation of it; and she accumulated each act of independent volition in witness and warning against him. Their mass oppressed but never deterred him. He expected to do the wrong thing when left to his own devices, and he did it without any apparent recollection of his former misdeeds and their consequences. There was a good deal of comedy in it all, and some tragedy.

He now experienced a certain expansion, such as husbands of his kind will imagine, on going back to his hotel alone. It was, perhaps, a revulsion from the pain of parting; and he toyed with the idea of Mrs. Grosvenor Green's apartment, which, in its preposterous unsuitability, had a strange attraction. He felt that he could take it with less risk than anything else they had seen, but he said he would look at all the other places in town first. He really spent the greater part of the next day in hunting up the owner of an apartment that had neither steam-

heat nor an elevator, but was otherwise perfect, and trying to get him to take less than the agent asked. By a curious psychical operation he was able, in the transaction, to work himself into quite a passionate desire for the apartment, while he held the Grosvenor Green apartment in the background of his mind as something that he could return to as altogether more suitable. He conducted some simultaneous negotiation for a furnished house, which enhanced still more the desirability of the Grosvenor Green apartment. Toward evening he went off at a tangent far up-town, so as to be able to tell his wife how utterly preposterous the best there would be as compared even with this ridiculous Grosvenor Green gimerackery. It is hard to report the processes of his sophistication; perhaps this, again, may best be left to the marital imagination.

He rang at the last of these up-town apartments as it was falling dusk, and it was long before the janitor appeared. Then the man was very surly, and said if he looked at the flat now he would say it was too dark, like all the rest. His reluctance irritated March in proportion to his insincerity in proposing to look at it at all. He knew he did not mean to take it under any circumstances; that he was going to use his inspection of it in dishonest justification of his disobedience to his wife; but he put on an air of offended dignity. "If you don't wish to show the apartment," he said, "I don't care to see it."

The man groaned, for he was heavy, and no doubt

dreaded the stairs. He scratched a match on his thigh, and led the way up. March was sorry for him, and he put his fingers on a quarter in his waistcoat-pocket to give him at parting. At the same time, he had to trump up an objection to the flat. This was easy, for it was advertised as containing ten rooms, and he found the number eked out with the bath-room and two large closets. "It's light enough," said March, "but I don't see how you make out ten rooms."

"There's ten rooms," said the man, deigning no proof.

March took his fingers off the quarter, and went downstairs and out of the door without another word. It would be wrong, it would be impossible, to give the man anything after such insolence. He reflected, with shame, that it was also cheaper to punish than forgive him.

He returned to his hotel prepared for any desperate measure, and convinced now that the Grosvenor Green apartment was not merely the only thing left for him, but was, on its own merits, the best thing in New York.

Fulkerson was waiting for him in the reading-room, and it gave March the curious thrill with which a man closes with temptation when he said: "Look here! Why don't you take that woman's flat in the Xenophon? She's been at the agents again, and they've been at me. She likes your look—or Mrs. March's—and I guess you can have it at a pretty heavy discount from the original price. I'm author-

ised to say you can have it for one seventy-five a month, and I don't believe it would be safe for you to offer one fifty."

March shook his head, and dropped a mask of virtuous rejection over his corrupt acquiescence. "It's too small for us—we couldn't squeeze into it."

"Why, look here!" Fulkerson persisted. "How many rooms do you people want?"

"I've got to have a place to work——"

"Of course! And you've got to have it at the *Fifth Wheel* office."

"I hadn't thought of that," March began. "I suppose I *could* do my work at the office, as there's not much writing——"

"Why, of course you can't do your work at home. You just come round with me now, and look at that flat again."

"No; I can't do it."

"Why?"

"I—I've got to dine."

"All right," said Fulkerson. "Dine with me. I want to take you round to a little Italian place that I know."

One may trace the successive steps of March's descent in this simple matter with the same edification that would attend the study of the self-delusions and obfuscations of a man tempted to crime. The process is probably not at all different, and to the philosophical mind the kind of result is unimportant; the process is everything.

Fulkerson led him down one block and half

across another to the steps of a small dwelling-house, transformed, like many others, into a restaurant of the Latin ideal, with little or no structural change from the pattern of the lower middle-class New York home. There were the corroded brown-stone steps, the mean little front door, and the cramped entry with its narrow stairs by which ladies could go up to a dining-room appointed for them on the second floor; the parlours on the first were set about with tables, where men smoked cigarettes between the courses, and a single waiter ran swiftly to and fro with plates and dishes, and exchanged unintelligible outcries with a cook beyond a slide in the back parlour. He rushed at the new-comers, brushed the soiled table-cloth before them with a towel on his arm, covered its worst stains with a napkin, and brought them, in their order, the vermicelli soup, the fried fish, the cheese-strown spaghetti, the veal cutlets, the tepid roast fowl and salad, and the wizened pear and coffee which form the dinner at such places.

"Ah, this is *nice*!" said Fulkerson, after the laying of the charitable napkin, and he began to recognise acquaintances, some of whom he described to March as young literary men and artists with whom they should probably have to do; others were simply frequenters of the place, and were of all nationalities and religions apparently—at least, several were Hebrews and Cubans. "You get a pretty good slice of New York here," he said, "all except the frosting on top. That you won't find

much at Maroni's, though you will occasionally. I don't mean the ladies ever, of course." The ladies present seemed harmless and reputable looking people enough, but certainly they were not of the first fashion, and, except in a few instances, not Americans. "It's like cutting straight down through a fruit-cake," Fulkerson went on, "or a mince-pie, when you don't know who made the pie; you get a little of everything." He ordered a small flask of Chianti with the dinner, and it came in its pretty wicker jacket. March smiled upon it with tender reminiscence, and Fulkerson laughed. "Lights you up a little. I brought old Dryfoos here one day, and he thought it was sweet-oil; that's the kind of bottle they used to have it in at the country drug-stores."

"Yes, I remember now; but I'd totally forgotten it," said March. "How far back that goes! Who's Dryfoos?"

"Dryfoos?" Fulkerson, still smiling, tore off a piece of the half-yard of French loaf which had been supplied them, with two pale, thin disks of butter, and fed it into himself. "Old Dryfoos? Well, of course! I call him old, but he ain't so very. About fifty, or along there."

"No," said March, "that isn't very old—or not so old as it used to be."

"Well, I suppose you've got to know about him, anyway," said Fulkerson thoughtfully. "And I've been wondering just how I should tell you. Can't always make out exactly how much of a Bostonian

you really *are*! Ever been out in the natural gas country?"

"No," said March. "I've had a good deal of curiosity about it, but I've never been able to get away except in summer, and then we always preferred to go over the old ground, out to Niagara and back through Canada, the route we took on our wedding journey. The children like it as much as we do."

"Yes, yes," said Fulkerson. "Well, the natural gas country is worth seeing. I don't mean the Pittsburg gas-fields, but out in Northern Ohio and Indiana around Moffitt—that's the place in the heart of the gas region that they've been booming so. Yes, you ought to see that country. If you haven't been West for a good many years, you haven't got any idea how old the country looks. You remember how the fields used to be all full of stumps?"

"I should think so."

"Well, you won't see any stumps now. All that country out around Moffitt is just as smooth as a checker-board, and looks as old as England. You know how we used to burn the stumps out; and then somebody invented a stump-extractor, and we pulled them out with a yoke of oxen. Now they just touch 'em off with a little dynamite, and they've got a cellar dug and filled up with kindling ready for house-keeping whenever you want it. Only they haven't got any use for kindling in that country—all gas. I rode along on the cars through those

level black fields at corn-planting time, and every once in a while I'd come to a place with a piece of ragged old stove-pipe stickin' up out of the ground, and blazing away like forty, and a fellow ploughing all round it and not minding it any more than if it was spring violets. Horses didn't notice it, either. Well, they've always known about the gas out there; they say there are places in the woods where it's been burning ever since the country was settled.

"But when you come in sight of Moffitt—my, oh my! Well, you come in smell of it about as soon. That gas out there ain't odourless, like the Pittsburg gas, and so it's perfectly safe; but the smell isn't bad—about as bad as the finest kind of benzine. Well, the first thing that strikes you when you come to Moffitt is the notion that there has been a good warm, growing rain, and the town's come up overnight. That's in the suburbs, the annexes, and additions. But it ain't shabby—no shanty-town business; nice brick and frame houses, some of 'em Queen Anne style, and all of 'em looking as if they had come to stay. And when you drive up from the depôt you think everybody's moving. Everything seems to be piled into the street; old houses made over, and new ones going up everywhere. You know the kind of street Main Street always used to be in our section—half plank-road and turnpike, and the rest mud-hole, and a lot of stores and doggeries strung along with false fronts a story higher than the back, and here and there a decent building with the gable end to the public; and a court-house and

jail and two taverns and three or four churches. Well, they're all there in Moffitt yet, but architecture has struck it hard, and they've got a lot of new buildings that needn't be ashamed of themselves anywhere; the new court-house is as big as St. Peter's, and the Grand Opera-house is in the highest style of the art. You can't buy a lot on that street for much less than you can buy a lot in New York—or you couldn't when the boom was on; I saw the place just when the boom was in its prime. I went out there to work the newspapers in the syndicate business, and I got one of their men to write me a real bright, snappy account of the gas; and they just took me in their arms and showed me everything. Well, it *was* wonderful, and it was beautiful, too! To see a whole community stirred up like that was—just like a big boy, all hope and high spirits, and no discount on the remotest future; nothing but perpetual boom to the end of time—I tell you it warmed your blood. Why, there were some things about it that made you think what a nice kind of world this would be if people ever took hold together, instead of each fellow fighting it out on his own hook, and devil take the hindmost. They made up their minds at Moffitt that if they wanted their town to grow they'd got to keep their gas public property. So they extended their corporation line so as to take in pretty much the whole gas region round there; and then the city took possession of every well that was put down, and held it for the common good. Anybody that's a mind to

come to Moffitt and start any kind of manufacture can have all the gas he wants *free*; and for fifteen dollars a year you can have all the gas you want to heat and light your private house. The people hold on to it for themselves, and, as I say, it's a grand sight to see a whole community hanging together and working for the good of all, instead of splitting up into as many different cut-throats as there are able-bodied citizens. See that fellow?" Fulkerson broke off, and indicated with a twirl of his head a short, dark, foreign-looking man going out of the door. "They say that fellow's a Socialist. I think it's a shame they're allowed to come here. If they don't like the way we manage our affairs, let 'em stay at home," Fulkerson continued. "They do a lot of mischief, shooting off their mouths round here. I believe in free speech and all that; but I'd like to see these fellows shut up in jail and left to jaw each other to death. *We* don't want any of their poison."

March did not notice the vanishing Socialist. He was watching, with a teasing sense of familiarity, a tall, shabbily dressed, elderly man, who had just come in. He had the aquiline profile uncommon among Germans, and yet March recognised him at once as German. His long, soft beard and moustache had once been fair, and they kept some tone of their yellow in the gray to which they had turned. His eyes were full, and his lips and chin shaped the beard to the noble outline which shows in the beards the Italian masters liked to paint for their Last Suppers.

His carriage was erect and soldierly, and March presently saw that he had lost his left hand. He took his place at a table where the overworked waiter found time to cut up his meat, and put everything in easy reach of his right hand.

"Well," Fulkerson resumed, "they took me round everywhere in Moffitt, and showed me their big wells—lit 'em up for a private view, and let me hear them purr with the soft accents of a mass-meeting of locomotives. Why, when they let one of these wells loose in a meadow that they'd piped it into temporarily, it drove the flame away forty feet from the mouth of the pipe and blew it over half an acre of ground. They say when they let one of their big wells burn away all winter before they had learned how to control it, that well kept up a little summer all around it; the grass stayed green, and the flowers bloomed all through the winter. *I* don't know whether it's so or not. But *I* can believe anything of natural gas. My! but it was beautiful when they turned on the full force of that well and shot a roman candle into the gas—that's the way they light it—and a plume of fire about twenty feet wide and seventy-five feet high, all red and yellow and violet, jumped into the sky, and that big roar shook the ground under your feet! You felt like saying, 'Don't trouble yourself; I'm perfectly convinced. *I* believe in Moffitt.' We-e-e-ll!" drawled Fulkerson, with a long breath, "that's where I met old Dryfoos."

"Oh yes!—Dryfoos," said March. He observed

that the waiter had brought the old one-handed German a towering glass of beer.

"Yes," Fulkerson laughed. "We've got round to Dryfoos again. I thought I could cut a long story short, but I seem to be cutting a short story long. If you're not in a hurry, though——"

"Not in the least. Go on as long as you like."

"I met him there in the office of a real-estate man—speculator, of course; everybody was, in Moffitt; but a first-rate fellow, and public-spirited as all get-out; and when Dryfoos left he told me about him. Dryfoos was an old Pennsylvania Dutch farmer, about three or four miles out of Moffitt, and he'd lived there pretty much all his life; father was one of the first settlers. Everybody knew he had the right stuff in him, but he was slower than molasses in January, like those Pennsylvania Dutch. He'd got together the largest and handsomest farm anywhere around there; and he was making money on it, just like he was in some business somewhere; he was a very intelligent man; he took the papers and kept himself posted; but he was awfully old-fashioned in his ideas. He hung on to the doctrines as well as the dollars of the dads; it was a real thing with him. Well, when the boom began to come he hated it awfully, and he fought it. He used to write communications to the weekly newspaper in Moffitt—they've got three dailies there now—and throw cold water on the boom. He couldn't catch on no way. It made him sick to hear the clack that went on about the gas the

whole while, and that stirred up the neighbourhood and got into his family. Whenever he'd hear of a man that had been offered a big price for his land and was going to sell out and move into town, he'd go and labour with him and try to talk him out of it, and tell him how long his fifteen or twenty thousand would last him to live on, and shake the Standard Oil Company before him, and try to make him believe it wouldn't be five years before the Standard owned the whole region.

"Of course he couldn't do anything with them. When a man's offered a big price for his farm, he don't care whether it's by a secret emissary from the Standard Oil or not; he's going to sell and get the better of the other fellow if he can. Dryfoos couldn't keep the boom out of his own family even. His wife was with him. She thought whatever he said and did was just as right as if it had been thundered down from Sinai. But the young folks were sceptical, especially the girls that had been away to school. The boy that had been kept at home because he couldn't be spared from helping his father manage the farm was more like him, but they contrived to stir the boy up with the hot end of the boom too. So when a fellow came along one day and offered old Dryfoos a cool hundred thousand for his farm, it was all up with Dryfoos. He'd 'a' liked to 'a' kept the offer to himself and not done anything about it, but his vanity wouldn't let him do that; and when he let it out in his family the girls outvoted him. They just *made* him sell.

“He wouldn’t sell all. He kept about eighty acres that was off in one piece by itself, but the three hundred that had the old brick house on it, and the big barn—that went, and Dryfoos bought him a place in Moffitt and moved into town to live on the interest of his money. Just what he had scolded and ridiculed everybody else for doing. Well, they say that at first he seemed like he would go crazy. He hadn’t anything to do. He took a fancy to that land-agent, and he used to go and set in his office and ask him what he should do. ‘I hain’t got any horses, I hain’t got any cows, I hain’t got any pigs, I hain’t got any chickens. I hain’t got anything to do from sun up to sundown.’ The fellow said the tears used to run down the old fellow’s cheeks, and if he hadn’t been so busy himself he believed he should ‘a’ cried too. But most o’ people thought old Dryfoos was down in the mouth because he hadn’t asked more for his farm, when he wanted to buy it back and found they held it at a hundred and fifty thousand. People couldn’t believe he was just homesick and heartsick for the old place. Well, perhaps he *was* sorry he hadn’t asked more; that’s human nature *too*.

“After a while something happened. That land-agent used to tell Dryfoos to get out to Europe with his money and see life a little, or go and live in Washington, where he could *be* somebody; but Dryfoos wouldn’t, and he kept listening to the talk there, and all of a sudden he caught on. He came into that fellow’s one day with a plan for cutting

up the eighty acres he'd kept into town lots; and he'd got it all plotted out so well, and had so many practical ideas about it, that the fellow was astonished. He went right in with him, as far as Dryfoos would let him, and glad of the chance; and they were working the thing for all it was worth when I struck Moffitt. Old Dryfoos wanted me to go out and see the Dryfoos & Hendry Addition—guess he thought may be I'd write it up; and he drove me out there himself. Well, it was funny to see a town made: streets driven through; two rows of shade-trees, hard and soft, planted; cellars dug and houses put up—regular Queen Anne style, too, with stained glass—all at once. Dryfoos apologised for the streets because they were hand-made; said they expected their street-making machine Tuesday, and then they intended to *push* things."

Fulkerson enjoyed the effect of his picture on March for a moment, and then went on: "He was mighty intelligent, too, and he questioned me up about my business as sharp as *I* ever was questioned; seemed to kind of strike his fancy; I guess he wanted to find out if there was any money in it. He was making money, hand over hand, then; and he never stopped speculating and improving, till he'd scraped together three or four hundred thousand dollars; they said a million, but they like round numbers at Moffitt, and I guess half a million would lay over it comfortably and leave a few thousands to spare, probably. Then he came on to New York."

Fulkerson struck a match against the ribbed side of the porcelain cup that held the matches in the centre of the table, and lit a cigarette, which he began to smoke, throwing his head back with a leisurely effect, as if he had got to the end of at least as much of his story as he meant to tell without prompting.

March asked him the desired question. "What in the world for?"

Fulkerson took out his cigarette and said, with a smile: "To spend his money, and get his daughters into the old Knickerbocker society. May be he thought they were all the same kind of Dutch."

"And has he succeeded?"

"Well, they're not social leaders yet. But it's only a question of time—generation or two—especially if time's money, and if *Every Other Week* is the success it's bound to be."

"You don't mean to say, Fulkerson," said March, with a half-doubting, half-daunted laugh, "that *he's* your Angel?"

"That's what I mean to say," returned Fulkerson. "I ran onto him in Broadway one day last summer. If you ever saw anybody in your life, you're sure to meet him in Broadway again, sooner or later. That's the philosophy of the bunco business; country people from the same neighbourhood are sure to run up against each other the first time they come to New York. I put out my hand, and I said, 'Isn't this Mr. Dryfoos from Moffitt?' He didn't seem to have any use for my hand; he let me keep it, and

he squared those old lips of his till his imperial stuck straight out. Ever see Bernhardt in *L'Étrangère*? Well, the American husband is old Dryfoos all over; no moustache, and hay-coloured chin-whiskers cut slanting from the corners of his mouth. He cocked his little gray eyes at me, and says he, 'Yes, young man. My name is Dryfoos, and I'm from Moffitt. But I don't want no present of Longfellow's Works, illustrated; and I don't want to taste no fine teas; but I know a policeman that does; and if you're the son of my old friend Squire Strohfeldt, you'd better get out.' 'Well, then,' said I, 'how would you like to go into the newspaper syndicate business?' He gave another look at me, and then he burst out laughing, and he grabbed my hand, and he just froze to it. I never saw anybody so glad.

"Well, the long and the short of it was that I asked him round here to Maroni's to dinner; and before we broke up for the night we had settled the financial side of the plan that's brought you to New York. I can see," said Fulkerson, who had kept his eyes fast on March's face, "that you don't more than half like the idea of Dryfoos. It ought to give you more confidence in the thing than you ever had. You needn't be afraid," he added, with some feeling, "that I talked Dryfoos into the thing for my own advantage."

"Oh, my dear Fulkerson!" March protested, all the more fervently because he was really a little guilty.

"Well, of course not! I didn't mean you were.

But I just happened to tell him what I wanted to go into when I could see my way to it, and he caught on of his own accord. The fact is," said Fulkerson, "I guess I'd better make a clean breast of it, now I'm at it. Dryfoos wanted to get something for that boy of his to do. He's in railroads himself, and he's in mines and other things, and he keeps busy, and he can't bear to have his boy hanging round the house doing nothing, like as if he was a girl. I told him that the great object of a rich man was to get his son into just that fix, but he couldn't seem to see it, and the boy hated it himself. He's got a good head, and he wanted to study for the ministry when they were all living together out on the farm ; but his father had the old-fashioned ideas about that. You know they used to think that any sort of stuff was good enough to make a preacher out of ; but they wanted the good timber for business ; and so the old man wouldn't let him. You'll see the fellow ; you'll like him ; he's no fool, I can tell you ; and he's going to be our publisher, nominally at first and actually when I've taught him the ropes a little."

## XII.

FULKERSON stopped and looked at March, whom he saw lapsing into a serious silence. Doubtless he divined his uneasiness with the facts that had been given him to digest. He pulled out his watch and glanced at it. "See here, how would you like to go up to Forty-sixth Street with me, and drop in on old Dryfoos? Now's your chance. He's going West to-morrow, and won't be back for a month or so. They'll all be glad to see you, and you'll understand things better when you've seen him and his family. I can't explain."

March reflected a moment. Then he said, with a wisdom that surprised him, for he would have liked to yield to the impulse of his curiosity: "Perhaps we'd better wait till Mrs. March comes down, and let things take the usual course. The Dryfoos ladies will want to call on her as the last-comer, and if I treated myself *en garçon* now, and paid the first visit, it might complicate matters."

"Well, perhaps you're right," said Fulkerson. "I don't know much about these things, and I don't believe Ma Dryfoos does either." He was on his legs lighting another cigarette. "I suppose the

girls are getting themselves up in etiquette, though. Well, then, let's have a look at the *Every Other Week* building, and then, if you like your quarters there, you can go round and close for Mrs. Green's flat."

March's dormant allegiance to his wife's wishes had been roused by his decision in favour of good social usage. "I don't think I shall take the flat," he said.

"Well, don't reject it without giving it another look, anyway. Come on!"

He helped March on with his light overcoat, and the little stir they made for their departure caught the notice of the old German; he looked up from his beer at them. March was more than ever impressed with something familiar in his face. In compensation for his prudence in regard to the Dryfooses he now indulged an impulse. He stepped across to where the old man sat, with his bald head shining like ivory under the gas-jet, and his fine patriarchal length of bearded mask taking picturesque lights and shadows, and put out his hand to him.

"Lindau! Isn't this Mr. Lindau?"

The old man lifted himself slowly to his feet with mechanical politeness, and cautiously took March's hand. "Yes, my name is Lindau," he said slowly, while he scanned March's face. Then he broke into a long cry. "Ah-h-h-h-h, my dear poy! my yong friendt! my—my—— Idt is Passil Marge, not zo? Ah, ha, ha, ha! How gladt I am to zee you! Why, I am gladt! And you rememberdt me? You remember Schiller, and Goethe, and Uhland? And

Indianapolis? You still lif in Indianapolis? It sheers my hardt to zee you. But you are liddle oldt too? Twenty-five years makes a difference. Ah, I am gladt! Dell me, idt is Passil Marge, not zo?"

He looked anxiously into March's face, with a gentle smile of mixed hope and doubt, and March said: "As sure as it's Berthold Lindau, and I guess it's you. And you remember the old times? You were as much of a boy as I was, Lindau. Are you living in New York? Do you recollect how you tried to teach me to fence? I don't know how to this day, Lindau. How good you were, and how patient! Do you remember how we used to sit up in the little parlour back of your printing office, and read *Die Räuber* and *Die Theilung der Erde* and *Die Glocke*? And Mrs. Lindau? Is she with——"

"Deadt—deadt long ago. Right after I got home from the war—twenty years ago. But tell me, you are married? Children? Yes! Goodt! And how oldt are you now?"

"It makes me seventeen to see you, Lindau, but I've got a son nearly as old."

"Ah, ha, ha! Goodt! And where do you lif?"

"Well, I'm just coming to live in New York," March said, looking over at Fulkerson, who had been watching his interview with the perfunctory smile of sympathy that people put on at the meeting of old friends. "I want to introduce you to my friend Mr. Fulkerson. He and I are going into a literary enterprise here."

"Ah! zo?" said the old man, with polite interest. He took Fulkerson's proffered hand, and they all stood talking a few moments together.

Then Fulkerson said, with another look at his watch, "Well, March, we're keeping Mr. Lindau from his dinner."

"Dinner!" cried the old man. "Idt's better than breadt and meadt to see Mr. Marge!"

"I must be going, anyway," said March. "But I must see you again soon, Lindau. Where do you live? I want a long talk."

"And I. You will find me here at dinner-time," said the old man. "It is the best place;" and March fancied him reluctant to give another address.

To cover his consciousness he answered gaily, "Then, it's *auf wiederschen* with us. Well!"

"Also!" The old man took his hand, and made a mechanical movement with his mutilated arm, as if he would have taken it in a double clasp. He laughed at himself. "I wanted to gif you the other handt too, but I gafe it to your gountry a goodt while ago."

"To *my* country?" asked March, with a sense of pain, and yet lightly, as if it were a joke of the old man's. "Your country too, Lindau?"

The old man turned very grave, and said, almost coldly, "What gountry hass a poor man got, Mr. Marge?"

"Well, *you* ought to have a share in the one you helped to save for us rich men, Lindau," March returned, still humouring the joke.

The old man smiled sadly, but made no answer as he sat down again.

"Seems to be a little soured," said Fulkerson, as they went down the steps. He was one of those Americans whose habitual conception of life is unalloyed prosperity. When any experience or observation of his went counter to it he suffered something like physical pain. He eagerly shrugged away the impression left upon his buoyancy by Lindau, and added to March's continued silence, "What did I tell you about meeting every man in New York that you ever knew before?"

"I never expected to meet Lindau in the world again," said March, more to himself than to Fulkerson. "I had an impression that he had been killed in the war. I almost wish he had been."

"Oh, hello, now!" cried Fulkerson.

March laughed, but went on soberly. "He was a man predestined to adversity, though. When I first knew him out in Indianapolis he was starving along with a sick wife and a sick newspaper. It was before the Germans had come over to the Republicans generally, but Lindau was fighting the anti-slavery battle just as naturally at Indianapolis in 1858 as he fought behind the barricades at Berlin in 1848. And yet he was always such a gentle soul! And so generous! He taught me German for the love of it; he wouldn't spoil his pleasure by taking a cent from me; he seemed to get enough out of my being young and enthusiastic, and out of prophesying great things for me. I wonder what

the poor old fellow is doing here, with that one hand of his ? ”

“Not amassing a very handsome pittance, I should say,” said Fulkerson, getting back some of his lightness. “There are lots of two-handed fellows in New York that are not doing much better, I guess. May be he gets some writing on the German papers.”

“I hope so. He’s one of the most accomplished men ! He used to be a splendid musician—pianist—and knows eight or ten languages.”

“Well, it’s astonishing,” said Fulkerson, “how much lumber those Germans can carry around in their heads all their lives, and never work it up into anything. It’s a pity they couldn’t do the acquiring, and let out the use of their learning to a few bright Americans. We could make things hum, if we could arrange ’em that way.”

He talked on, unheeded by March, who went along half-consciously tormented by his lightness in the pensive memories the meeting with Lindau had called up. Was this all that sweet, unselfish nature could come to ? What a homeless old age at that meagre Italian *table d’hôte*, with that tall glass of beer for a half-hour’s oblivion ! That shabby dress, that pathetic mutilation ! He must have a pension, twelve dollars a month, or eighteen, from a grateful country. But what else did he eke out with ?

“Well, here we are,” said Fulkerson cheerily. He ran up the steps before March, and opened the carpenter’s temporary valve in the door frame, and

led the way into a darkness smelling sweetly of unpainted wood-work and newly dried plaster ; their feet slipped on shavings and grated on sand. He scratched a match, and found a candle, and then walked about up and down stairs, and lectured on the advantages of the place. He had fitted up bachelor apartments for himself in the house, and said that he was going to have a flat to let on the top floor. " I didn't offer it to you because I supposed you'd be too proud to live over your shop ; and it's too small, anyway ; only five rooms."

" Yes, that's too small," said March, shirking the other point.

" Well, then, here's the room I intend for your office," said Fulkerson, showing him into a large back parlour one flight up. " You'll have it quiet from the street noises here, and you can be at home or not as you please. There'll be a boy on the stairs to find out. Now, you see, this makes the Grosvenor Green flat practicable, if you want it."

March felt the forces of fate closing about him and pushing him to a decision. He feebly fought them off till he could have another look at the flat. Then, baffled and subdued still more by the unexpected presence of Mrs. Grosvenor Green herself, who was occupying it so as to be able to show it effectively, he took it. He was aware more than ever of its absurdities ; he knew that his wife would never cease to hate it ; but he had suffered one of those eclipses of the imagination to which men of his temperament are subject, and in which he could

see no future for his desires. He felt a comfort in irretrievably committing himself, and exchanging the burden of indecision for the burden of responsibility.

"I didn't know," said Fulkerson, as they walked back to his hotel together, "but you might fix it up with that lone widow and her pretty daughter to take part of *their* house here." He seemed to be reminded of it by the fact of passing the house, and March looked up at its dark front. He could not have told exactly why he felt a pang of remorse at the sight, and doubtless it was more regret for having taken the Grosvenor Green flat than for not having taken the widow's rooms. Still he could not forget her wistfulness when his wife and he were looking at them, and her disappointment when they decided against them. He had toyed, in his after-talk to Mrs. March, with a sort of hypothetical obligation they had to modify their plans so as to meet the widow's want of just such a family as theirs; they had both said what a blessing it would be to her, and what a pity they could not do it; but they had decided very distinctly that they could not. Now it seemed to him that they might; and he asked himself whether he had not actually departed as much from their ideal as if he had taken board with the widow. Suddenly it seemed to him that his wife asked him this too.

"I reckon," said Fulkerson, "that she could have arranged to give you your meals in your rooms, and it would have come to about the same thing as house-keeping."

"No sort of boarding can be the same as house-keeping," said March. "I want my little girl to have the run of a kitchen, and I want the whole family to have the moral effect of house-keeping. It's demoralising to board, in every way; it isn't a home, if anybody else takes the care of it off your hands."

"Well, I suppose so," Fulkerson assented; but March's words had a hollow ring to himself, and in his own mind he began to retaliate his dissatisfaction upon Fulkerson.

He parted from him on the usual terms outwardly, but he felt obscurely abused by Fulkerson in regard to the Dryfooses, father and son. He did not know but Fulkerson had taken an advantage of him in allowing him to commit himself to their enterprise without fully and frankly telling him who and what his backer was; he perceived that with young Dryfoos as the publisher and Fulkerson as the general director of the paper there might be very little play for his own ideas of its conduct. Perhaps it was the hurt to his vanity involved by the recognition of this fact that made him forget how little choice he really had in the matter, and how, since he had not accepted the offer to edit the insurance paper, nothing remained for him but to close with Fulkerson. In this moment of suspicion and resentment he accused Fulkerson of hastening his decision in regard to the Grosvenor Green apartment; he now refused to consider it a decision, and said to himself that if he felt disposed to do so he

would send Mrs. Green a note reversing it in the morning. But he put it all off till morning with his clothes, when he went to bed ; he put off even thinking what his wife would say ; he cast Fulkerson and his constructive treachery out of his mind too, and invited into it some pensive reveries of the past, when he still stood at the parting of the ways, and could take this path or that. In his middle life this was not possible ; he must follow the path chosen long ago, wherever it led. He was not master of himself, as he once seemed, but the servant of those he loved ; if he could do what he liked, perhaps he might renounce this whole New York enterprise, and go off somewhere out of the reach of care ; but he could not do what he liked, that was very clear. In the pathos of this conviction he dwelt compassionately upon the thought of poor old Lindau ; he resolved to make him accept a handsome sum of money—more than he could spare, something that he would feel the loss of—in payment of the lessons in German and fencing given so long ago. At the usual rate for such lessons, his debt, with interest for twenty odd years, would run very far into the hundreds. Too far, he perceived, for his wife's joyous approval ; he determined not to add the interest ; or he believed that Lindau would refuse the interest ; he put a fine speech in his mouth, making him do so ; and after that he got Lindau employment on *Every Other Week*, and took care of him till he died.

Through all his melancholy and munificence he

was aware of sordid anxieties for having taken the Grosvenor Green apartment. These began to assume visible, tangible shapes as he drowsed, and to become personal entities, from which he woke, with little starts, to a realisation of their true nature, and then suddenly fell fast asleep.

In the accomplishment of the events which his reverie played with, there was much that retroactively stamped it with prophecy, but much also that was better than he forboded. He found that with regard to the Grosvenor Green apartment he had not allowed for his wife's willingness to get any sort of roof over her head again after the removal from their old home, or for the alleviations that grow up through mere custom. The practical workings of the apartment were not so bad; it had its good points, and after the first sensation of oppression in it they began to feel the convenience of its arrangement. They were at that time of life when people first turn to their children's opinion with deference, and, in the loss of keenness in their own likes and dislikes, consult the young preferences which are still so sensitive. It went far to reconcile Mrs. March to the apartment that her children were pleased with its novelty; when this wore off for them, she had herself begun to find it much more easily manageable than a house. After she had put away several barrels of gimcracks, and folded up screens and rugs and skins, and carried them all off to the little dark store-room which the flat developed, she perceived at once a roominess and coziness in it

unsuspected before. Then, when people began to call, she had a pleasure, a superiority, in saying that it was a furnished apartment, and in disclaiming all responsibility for the upholstery and decoration. If March was by, she always explained that it was Mr. March's fancy, and amiably laughed it off with her callers as a mannish eccentricity. Nobody really seemed to think it otherwise than pretty; and this again was a triumph for Mrs. March, because it showed how inferior the New York taste was to the Boston taste in such matters.

March submitted silently to his punishment, and laughed with her before company at his own eccentricity. She had been so preoccupied with the adjustment of the family to its new quarters and circumstances that the time passed for laying his misgivings, if they were misgivings, about Fulkerson before her, and when an occasion came for expressing them they had themselves passed in the anxieties of getting forward the first number of *Every Other Week*. He kept these from her too, and the business that brought them to New York had apparently dropped into abeyance before the questions of domestic economy that presented and absented themselves. March knew his wife to be a woman of good mind and in perfect sympathy with him, but he understood the limitations of her perspective; and if he was not too wise, he was too experienced to intrude upon it any affairs of his till her own were reduced to the right order and proportion. It would have been folly to talk to her of Fulkerson's

conjecturable uneandour while she was in doubt whether her cook would like the kitchen, or her two servants would consent to room together ; and till it was decided what school Tom should go to, and whether Bella should have lessons at home or not, the relation which March was to bear to the Dryfooses, as owner and publisher, was not to be discussed with his wife. He might drag it in, but he was aware that with her mind distracted by more immediate interests he could not get from her that judgment, that reasoned divination, which he relied upon so much. She would try, she would do her best, but the result would be a view clouded and discoloured by the effort she must make.

He put the whole matter by, and gave himself to the details of the work before him. In this he found not only escape, but reassurance, for it became more and more apparent that whatever was nominally the structure of the business, a man of his qualifications and his instincts could not have an insignificant place in it. He had also the consolation of liking his work, and of getting an instant grasp of it that grew constantly firmer and closer. The joy of knowing that he had not made a mistake was great. In giving rein to ambitions long forborne he seemed to get back to the youth when he had indulged them first ; and after half a lifetime passed in pursuits alien to his nature, he was feeling the serene happiness of being mated through his work to his early love. From the outside the spectacle might have had its pathos, and it is not easy to justify such an

experiment as he had made at his time of life, except upon the ground where he rested from its consideration—the ground of necessity.

His work was more in his thoughts than himself, however, and as the time for the publication of the first number of his periodical came nearer, his cares all centred upon it. Without fixing any date, Fulkerson had announced it, and pushed his announcements with the shameless vigour of a born advertiser. He worked his interest with the press to the utmost, and paragraphs of a variety that did credit to his ingenuity were afloat everywhere. Some of them were speciously unfavourable in tone; they criticised and even ridiculed the principles on which the new departure in literary journalism was based. Others defended it; others yet denied that this rumoured principle was really the principle. All contributed to make talk. All proceeded from the same fertile invention.

March observed with a degree of mortification that the talk was very little of it in the New York press; there the references to the novel enterprise were slight and cold. But Fulkerson said: "Don't mind that, old man. It's the whole country that makes or breaks a thing like this; New York has very little to do with it. Now if it were a play, it would be different. New York does make or break a play; but it doesn't make or break a book; it doesn't make or break a magazine. The great mass of the readers are outside of New York, and the rural districts are what we have got to go for.

They don't read much in New York ; they write, and talk about what they've written. Don't you worry."

The rumour of Fulkerson's connection with the enterprise accompanied many of the paragraphs, and he was able to stay March's thirst for employment by turning over to him from day to day heaps of the manuscripts which began to pour in from his old syndicate writers, as well as from adventurous volunteers all over the country. With these in hand March began practically to plan the first number, and to concrete a general scheme from the material and the experience they furnished. They had intended to issue the first number with the new year, and if it had been an affair of literature alone, it would have been very easy ; but it was the art leg they limped on, as Fulkerson phrased it. They had not merely to deal with the question of specific illustrations for this article or that, but to decide the whole character of their illustrations, and first of all to get a design for a cover which should both ensnare the heedless and captivate the fastidious. These things did not come properly within March's province—that had been clearly understood—and for a while Fulkerson tried to run the art leg himself. The phrase was again his, but it was simpler to make the phrase than to run the leg. The difficult generation, at once stiff-backed and slippery, with which he had to do in this endeavour, reduced even so buoyant an optimist to despair, and after wasting some valuable weeks in trying to work the

artists himself, he determined to get an artist to work them. But what artist? It could not be a man with fixed reputation and a following: he would be too costly, and would have too many enemies among his brethren, even if he would consent to undertake the job. Fulkerson had a man in mind, an artist too, who would have been the very thing if he had been the thing at all. He had talent enough, and his sort of talent would reach round the whole situation, but, as Fulkerson said, he was as many kinds of an ass as he was kinds of an artist.

## PART SECOND.

### I.

THE evening when March closed with Mrs. Green's reduced offer, and decided to take her apartment, the widow whose lodgings he had rejected sat with her daughter in an upper room at the back of her house. In the shaded glow of the drop-light she was sewing, and the girl was drawing at the same table. From time to time, as they talked, the girl lifted her head and tilted it a little on one side so as to get some desired effect of her work.

"It's a mercy the cold weather holds off," said the mother. "We should have to light the furnace, unless we wanted to scare everybody away with a cold house; and I don't know who would take care of it, or what would become of us, every way."

"They seem to have been scared away from a house that wasn't cold," said the girl. "Perhaps they might like a cold one. But it's too early for cold yet. It's only just in the beginning of November."

"The *Messenger* says they've had a sprinkling of snow."

"Oh yes, at St. Barnaby! I don't know when they don't have sprinklings of snow there. I'm awfully glad we haven't got *that* winter before us."

The widow sighed as mothers do who feel the contrast their experience opposes to the hopeful recklessness of such talk as this. "We may have a worse winter here," she said darkly.

"Then I couldn't stand it," said the girl, "and I should go in for lighting out to Florida double-quick."

"And how would you get to Florida?" demanded her mother severely.

"Oh, by the usual conveyance—Pullman vestibuled train, I suppose. What makes you so blue, mamma?" The girl was all the time sketching away, rubbing out, lifting her head for the effect, and then bending it over her work again without looking at her mother.

"I am *not* blue, Alma. But I cannot endure this—this hopefulness of yours."

"Why? What harm does it do?"

"Harm?" echoed the mother.

Pending the effort she must make in saying, the girl cut in: "Yes, harm. You've kept your despair dusted off and ready for use at an instant's notice ever since we came, and what good has *it* done? I'm going to keep on hoping to the bitter end. That's what papa did."

It was what the Rev. Archibald Leighton had done with all the consumptive's buoyancy. The morning he died he told them that now he had

turned the point and was really going to get well. The cheerfulness was not only in his disease, but in his temperament. Its excess was always a little against him in his church-work, and Mrs. Leighton was right enough in feeling that if it had not been for the ballast of her instinctive despondency he would have made shipwreck of such small chances of prosperity as befell him in life. It was not from him that his daughter got her talent, though he had left her his temperament intact of his widow's legal thirds. He was one of those men of whom the country people say when he is gone that the woman gets along better without him. Mrs. Leighton had long eked out their income by taking a summer boarder or two, as a great favour, into her family ; and when the greater need came, she frankly gave up her house to the summer-folks (as they call them in the country), and managed it for their comfort from the small quarter of it in which she shut herself up with her daughter.

The notion of shutting up is an exigency of the rounded period. The fact is, of course, that Alma Leighton was not shut up in any sense whatever. She was the pervading light, if not force, of the house. She was a good cook, and she managed the kitchen with the help of an Irish girl, while her mother looked after the rest of the house-keeping. But she was not systematic ; she had inspiration but not discipline, and her mother mourned more over the days when Alma left the whole dinner to the Irish girl than she rejoiced in those when one of

Alma's great thoughts took form in a chicken-pie of incomparable savour or in a matchless pudding. The off-days came when her artistic nature was expressing itself in charcoal, for she drew to the admiration of all among the lady boarders who could not draw. The others had their reserves; they readily conceded that Alma had genius, but they were sure she needed instruction. On the other hand, they were not so radical as to agree with the old painter who came every summer to paint the elms of the St. Barnaby meadows. He contended that she needed to be a man in order to amount to anything; but in this theory he was opposed by an authority of his own sex, whom the lady sketchers believed to speak with more impartiality in a matter concerning them as much as Alma Leighton. He said that instruction would do, and he was not only younger and handsomer, but he was fresher from the schools than old Harrington, who, even the lady sketchers could see, painted in an obsolescent manner. His name was Beaton—Angus Beaton; but he was not Scotch, or not more Scotch than Mary Queen of Scots was. His father was a Scotchman, but Beaton was born in Syracuse, New York, and it had taken only three years in Paris to obliterate many traces of native and ancestral manner in him. He wore his black beard cut shorter than his moustache, and a little pointed; he stood with his shoulders well thrown back and with a lateral curve of his person when he talked about art, which would alone have carried conviction even if he had not had a thick,

dark bang coming almost to the brows of his mobile grey eyes, and had not spoken English with quick, staccato impulses, so as to give it the effect of epigrammatic and sententious French. One of the ladies said that you always thought of him as having spoken French after it was over, and accused herself of wrong in not being able to feel afraid of him. None of the ladies were afraid of him, though they could not believe that he was really so deferential to their work as he seemed; and they knew, when he would not criticise Mr. Harrington's work, that he was just acting from principle.

They may or may not have known the difference with which he treated Alma's work; but the girl herself felt that his abrupt, impersonal comment recognised her as a real sister in art. He told her she ought to come to New York, and draw in the League, or get into some painter's private class; and it was the sense of duty thus appealed to which finally resulted in the hazardous experiment she and her mother were now making. There were no logical breaks in the chain of their reasoning from past success with boarders in St. Barnaby to future success with boarders in New York. Of course the outlay was much greater. The rent of the furnished house they had taken was such that if they failed their experiment would be little less than ruinous.

But they were not going to fail; that was what Alma contended, with a hardy courage that her mother sometimes felt almost invited failure, if it did not deserve it. She was one of those people

who believe that if you dread harm enough it is less likely to happen. She acted on this superstition as if it were a religion.

"If it had not been for my despair, as you call it, Alma," she answered, "I don't know where we should have been now."

"I suppose we should have been in St. Barnaby," said the girl. "And if it's worse to be in New York, you see what your despair's done, mamma. But what's the use? You meant well, and I don't blame you. You can't expect even despair to come out always just the way you want it. Perhaps you've used too much of it." The girl laughed, and Mrs. Leighton laughed too. Like every one else, she was not merely a prevailing mood, as people are apt to be in books, but was an irregularly spheroidal character, with surfaces that caught the different lights of circumstance and reflected them. Alma got up and took a pose before the mirror, which she then transferred to her sketch. The room was pinned about with other sketches, which showed with fantastic indistinctness in the shaded gas-light. Alma held up the drawing. "How do you like it?"

Mrs. Leighton bent forward over her sewing to look at it. "You've got the man's face rather weak."

"Yes, that's so. Either I see all the hidden weakness that's in men's natures, and bring it to the surface in their figures, or else I put my own weakness into them. And anyway, it's a drawback to their presenting a truly manly appearance.

As long as I have one of the miserable objects before me, I can draw him; but as soon as his back's turned I get to putting ladies into men's clothes. I should think you'd be scandalised, mamma, if you were a really feminine person. It must be your despair that helps you to bear up. But what's the matter with the young lady in young lady's clothes? Any dust on *her*?"

"What expressions!" said Mrs. Leighton. "Really, Alma, for a refined girl you *are* the most unrefined!"

"Go on—about the girl in the picture!" said Alma, slightly knocking her mother on the shoulder, as she stood over her.

"I don't see anything *to* her. What's she doing?"

"Oh, just being made love to, I suppose."

"She's perfectly insipid!"

"You're awfully articulate, mamma! Now, if Mr. Wetmore was to criticise that picture he'd draw a circle round it in the air, and look at it through that, and tilt his head first on one side and then on the other, and then look at you, as if you were a figure in it, and then collapse a while, and moan a little and gasp, 'Isn't your young lady a little too—too——' and then he'd try to get the word out of *you*, and groan and suffer some more; and you'd say, 'She *is*, rather,' and that would give him courage, and he'd say, 'I don't mean that she's so very——' 'Of course not.' 'You understand?' 'Perfectly. I see it myself, now.' 'Well then,'—and he'd take your pencil and begin to draw—'I

should give her a little more—— Ah?’ ‘Yes, I see the difference.’ ‘You see the difference?’ And he’d go off to some one else, and you’d know that you’d been doing the wishy-washiest thing in the world, though he hadn’t *spoken* a word of criticism, and couldn’t. But *he* wouldn’t have noticed the expression at all; he’d have shown you where your drawing was bad. He doesn’t care for what he calls the literature of a thing; he says that will take care of itself if the drawing’s good. He doesn’t like my doing these *chic* things; but I’m going to keep it up, for *I* think it’s the nearest way to illustrating.”

She took her sketch and pinned it up on the door.

“And has Mr. Beaton been about, yet?” asked her mother.

“No,” said the girl, with her back still turned; and she added, “I believe he’s in New York; Mr. Wetmore’s seen him.”

“It’s a little strange he doesn’t call.”

“It would be if he were not an artist. But artists never do anything like other people. He was on his good behaviour while he was with us, and he’s a great deal more conventional than most of them; but even he can’t keep it up. That’s what makes me really think that women can never amount to anything in art. They keep all their appointments, and fulfil all their duties just as if they didn’t know anything about art. Well, most of them don’t. We’ve got that new model to-day.”

“What new model?”

"The one Mr. Wetmore was telling us about—the old German; he's splendid. He's got the most beautiful head; just like the old masters' things. He used to be Humphrey Williams's model for his biblical pieces; but since he's dead, the old man hardly gets anything to do. Mr. Wetmore says there isn't anybody in the Bible that Williams didn't paint him as. He's the Law and the Prophets in all his Old Testament pictures, and he's Joseph, Peter, Judas Iscariot, and the Scribes and Pharisees in the New."

"It's a good thing people don't know how artists work, or some of the most sacred pictures would have no influence," said Mrs. Leighton.

"Why, of course not!" cried the girl. "And the influence is the last thing a painter thinks of—or supposes he thinks of. What he knows he's anxious about is the drawing and the colour. But people will never understand how simple artists are. When I reflect what a complex and sophisticated being *I* am, I'm afraid I can never come to anything in art. Or I should be if I hadn't genius."

"Do you think Mr. Beaton is very simple?" asked Mrs. Leighton.

"Mr. Wetmore doesn't think he's very much of an artist. He thinks he talks too well. They believe that if a man can express himself clearly he can't paint."

"And what do *you* believe?"

"Oh, *I* can express myself, *too*."

The mother seemed to be satisfied with this evasion.

After a while she said, "I presume he will call when he gets settled."

The girl made no answer to this. "One of the girls says that old model is an educated man. He was in the war, and lost a hand. Doesn't it seem a pity for such a man to have to sit to a class of affected geese like us as a model? I declare it makes me sick. And we shall keep him a week, and pay him six or seven dollars for the use of his grand old head, and *then* what will he do? The last time he was regularly employed was when Mr. Mace was working at his Damascus Massacre. Then he wanted so many Arab sheiks and Christian elders that he kept old Mr. Lindau steadily employed for six months. Now he has to pick up odd jobs where he can."

"I suppose he has his pension," said Mrs. Leighton.

"No; one of the girls"—that was the way Alma always described her fellow-students—"says he has no pension. He didn't apply for it for a long time, and then there was a hitch about it, and it was somethinged—vetoed, I believe she said."

'Who vetoed it?' asked Mrs. Leighton, with some curiosity about the process, which she held in reserve.

"I don't know—whoever vetoes things. I wonder what Mr. Wetmore *does* think of us—his class. We must seem perfectly crazy. There isn't one of us really knows what she's doing it for, or what she expects to happen when she's done it. I suppose

every one thinks she has genius. I know the Nebraska widow does, for she says that unless you have genius it isn't the least use. Everybody's puzzled to know what she does with her baby when she's at work—whether she gives it soothing syrup. I wonder how Mr. Wetmore can keep from laughing in our faces. I know he does behind our backs."

Mrs. Leighton's mind wandered back to another point. "Then if he says Mr. Beaton can't paint, I presume he doesn't respect him very much."

"Oh, he never *said* he couldn't paint. But I know he thinks so. He says he's an excellent critic."

"Alma," her mother said, with the effect of breaking off, "what *do* you suppose is the reason he hasn't been near us?"

"Why, I don't know, mamma, except that it would have been natural for another person to come, and he's an artist—at least, artist enough for that."

"That doesn't account for it altogether. He was very nice at St. Barnaby, and seemed so interested in you—your work."

"Plenty of people were nice at St. Barnaby. That rich Mrs. Horn couldn't contain her joy when she heard we were coming to New York, but she hasn't poured in upon us a great deal since we got here."

"But that's different. She's very fashionable, and she's taken up with her own set. But Mr. Beaton's one of our kind."

"Thank you. Papa wasn't *quite* a tombstone-cutter, mamma."

"That makes it all the harder to bear. He *can't* be ashamed of us. Perhaps he doesn't know where we are."

"Do you wish to send him your card, mamma?" The girl flushed and towered in scorn of the idea.

"Why, no, Alma," returned her mother.

"Well, then," said Alma.

But Mrs. Leighton was not so easily quelled. She had got her mind on Mr. Beaton, and she could not detach it at once. Besides, she was one of those women (they are commoner than the same sort of men) whom it does not pain to take out their most intimate thoughts and examine them in the light of other people's opinions. "But I don't see how he can behave so. He must know that——"

"That *what*, mamma?" demanded the girl.

"That he influenced us a great deal in coming——"

"He *didn't*. If he dared to presume to think such a thing——"

"Now, Alma," said her mother with the clinging persistence of such natures, "you know he did. And it's no use for you to pretend that we didn't count upon him in—in every way. *You* may not have noticed his attentions, and I don't say you did, but others certainly did; and I must say that I *didn't* expect he would drop us so."

"Drop us!" cried Alma, in a fury. "Oh!"

"Yes, drop us, Alma. He must know where we are. Of course, Mr. Wetmore's spoken to him about you, and it's a shame that he hasn't been near us.

I should have thought common gratitude, common decency, would have brought him after—after all we did for him.”

“We did nothing for him—*nothing!* He paid his board, and that ended it.”

“No, it didn’t, Alma. You know what he used to say—about its being like home, and all that; and I must say that after his attentions to you, and all the things you told me he said, I expected something very dif——”

A sharp peal of the door-bell thrilled through the house, and as if the pull of the bell-wire had twitched her to her feet, Mrs. Leighton sprang up and grappled with her daughter in their common terror.

They both glared at the clock and made sure that it was five minutes after nine. Then they abandoned them some moments to the unrestricted play of their apprehensions.

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## II.

"WHY, Alma," whispered the mother, "who in the world can it be at this time of night? You don't suppose he——"

"Well, I'm not going to the door anyhow, mother, I don't care who it is; and of course he wouldn't be such a goose as to come at this hour." She put on a look of miserable trepidation, and shrank back from the door, while the hum of the bell died away in the hall.

"What shall we do?" asked Mrs. Leighton helplessly.

"Let him go away—whoever they are," said Alma.

Another and more peremptory ring forbade them refuge in this simple expedient.

"Oh dear! what shall we do? Perhaps it's a despatch."

The conjecture moved Alma to no more than a rigid stare. "I shall not go," she said. A third ring more insistent than the others followed, and she said: "You go ahead, mamma, and I'll come behind to scream if it's anybody. We can look through the side-lights at the door first."

Mrs. Leighton fearfully led the way from the back chamber where they had been sitting, and slowly descended the stairs. Alma came behind and turned up the hall gas-jet with a sudden flash that made them both jump a little. The gas inside rendered it more difficult to tell who was on the threshold, but Mrs. Leighton decided from a timorous peep through the scrims that it was a lady and gentleman. Something in this distribution of sex emboldened her ; she took her life in her hand, and opened the door.

The lady spoke. "Does Mrs. Leighton live heah?" she said, in a rich, throaty voice ; and she feigned a reference to the agent's permit she held in her hand.

"Yes," said Mrs. Leighton ; she mechanically occupied the doorway, while Alma already quivered behind her with impatience of her impoliteness.

"Oh," said the lady, who began to appear more and more a young lady, "Ah didn't know but Ah had mistaken the ho'se. Ah suppose it's rather late to see the Apawtments, and Ah most ask you to pawdon us." She put this tentatively, with a delicately growing recognition of Mrs. Leighton as the lady of the house, and a humorous intelligence of the situation in the glance she threw Alma over her mother's shoulder. "Ah'm afraid we most have frightened you."

"Oh, not at all," said Alma ; and at the same time her mother said, "Will you walk in, please?"

The gentleman promptly removed his hat and made the Leightons an inclusive bow. "You awe

very kind, madam, and I am sorry for the trouble we awe giving you." He was tall and severe-looking, with a grey, trooperish moustache and iron-grey hair, and, as Alma decided, iron-grey eyes. His daughter was short, plump, and fresh-coloured, with an effect of liveliness that did not all express itself in her broad-vowelled, rather formal speech, with its odd valuations of some of the auxiliary verbs, and its total elision of the canine letter.

"We awe from the Soath," she said, "and we arrived this mawning, but we got this cyahd from the brokah just befo' dinnah, and so we awe rathah late."

"Not at all; it's only nine o'clock," said Mrs. Leighton, in condonation. She looked up from the card the young lady had given her, and explained, "We haven't got in our servants yet, and we had to answer the bell ourselves, and——"

"You *were* frightened, of coase," said the young lady caressingly.

The gentleman said they ought not to *have* come so late, and he offered some formal apologies.

"We should have been just as much scared any time after five o'clock," Alma said to the sympathetic intelligence in the girl's face.

She laughed out. "Of coase! Ah would have my hawt in my moath all day long too, if *Ah* was living in a big hoase alone."

A moment of stiffness followed; Mrs. Leighton would have liked to withdraw from the intimacy of the situation, but she did not know how. It was

very well for these people to assume to be what they pretended; but, she reflected too late, she had no proof of it except the agent's permit. They were all standing in the hall together, and she prolonged the awkward pause while she examined the permit. "You are Mr. Woodburn?" she asked, in a way that Alma felt implied he might not be.

"Yes, madam; from Charlottesboag, Virginia," he answered, with the slight umbrage a man shows when the strange cashier turns his check over and questions him before cashing it.

Alma writhed internally, but outwardly remained subordinate; she examined the other girl's dress, and decided in a superficial consciousness that she had made her own bonnet.

"I shall be glad to show you my rooms," said Mrs Leighton, with an irrelevant sigh. "You must excuse their being not just as I should wish them. We're hardly settled yet."

"Don't speak of it, madam," said the gentleman, "if you can overlook the trouble we awe giving you at such an unseasonable houah."

"Ah'm a hoase-keepah mahself," Miss Woodburn joined in, "and Ah know ho' to accyoant fo' everything."

Mrs. Leighton led the way upstairs, and the young lady decided upon the large front room and small side-room on the third story. She said she could take the small one, and the other was so large that her father could both sleep and work in it. She seemed not ashamed to ask if Mrs. Leighton's

price was inflexible, but gave way laughing when her father refused to have any bargaining, with a haughty self-respect which he softened to deference for Mrs. Leighton. His impulsiveness opened the way for some confidences from her, and before the affair was arranged she was enjoying in her quality of clerical widow the balm of the Virginians' reverent sympathy. They said they were Church people themselves.

"Ah don't know what yo' mothah means by yo' hoase not being in oddah," the young lady said to Alma, as they went downstairs together. "Ah'm a great hoase-keepah mahself, and Ah mean what Ah say."

They had all turned mechanically into the room where the Leightons were sitting when the Woodburns rang. Mr. Woodburn consented to sit down, and he remained listening to Mrs. Leighton while his daughter bustled up to the sketches pinned round the room, and questioned Alma about them.

"Ah suppose you awe going to be a great awtust?" she said, in friendly banter, when Alma owned to having done the things. "Ah've a great notion to take a few lessons mahself. Who's yo' teachah?"

Alma said she was drawing in Mr. Wetmore's class, and Miss Woodburn said: "Well, it's just beautiful, Miss Leighton; it's grand. Ah suppose it's raght expensive, now? Mah goodness! we have to cyoant the coast so much nowadays, it seems to me we do nothing *but* cyoant it. Ah'd like to bah something once without askin' the price."

"Well, if you didn't ask it," said Alma, "I don't believe Mr. Wetmore would ever know what the price of his lessons was. He has to think, when you ask him."

"Why, he most be chomming," said Miss Woodburn. "Perhaps Ah maght get the lessons for nothing from him. Well, Ah believe in my soul Ah'll trah. Now ho' did you begin? and ho' do you expect to get anything oat of it?" She turned on Alma eyes brimming with a shrewd mixture of fun and earnest, and Alma made note of the fact that she had an early nineteenth-century face, round, arch, a little coquettish, but extremely sensible and unspoiled-looking, such as used to be painted a good deal in miniature at that period; a tendency of her brown hair to twine and twist at the temples helped the effect; a high comb would have completed it, Alma felt, if she had her bonnet off. It was almost a Yankee country-girl type; but perhaps it appeared so to Alma because it was, like that, pure Anglo-Saxon. Alma herself, with her dull dark skin, slender in figure, slow in speech, with aristocratic forms in her long hands, and the oval of her fine face pointed to a long chin, felt herself much more Southern in style than this blooming, bubbling, bustling Virginian.

"I don't know," she answered slowly.

"Going to take po'traits," suggested Miss Woodburn, "or just paint the ahdeal?" A demure burlesque lurked in her tone.

"I suppose I don't expect to paint at all," said

Alma. "I'm going to illustrate books—if anybody will let me."

"Ah should think they'd just joamp at you," said Miss Woodburn. "Ah'll tell you what let's do, Miss Leighton: you make some pictures, and Ah'll wrahte a book fo' them. Ah've got to do something. Ah maght as well wrahte a book. You know we Southerners have all had to go to woak. But Ah don't mand it. I tell papa I shouldn't ca' fo' the disgrace of bein' poo' if it wasn't fo' the inconvenience."

"Yes, it's inconvenient," said Alma; "but you forget it when you're at work, don't you think?"

"Mah, yes! Perhaps that's one reason why poo' people have to woak so hawd—to keep their mands off their poverty."

The girls both tittered, and turned from talking in a low tone with their backs toward their elders, and faced them.

"Well, Madison," said Mr. Woodburn, "it is time we should go. I bid you good night, madam," he bowed to Mrs. Leighton. "Good night," he bowed again to Alma.

His daughter took leave of them in formal phrase, but with a jolly cordiality of manner that deformed it. "We shall be roand raght soon in the mawning, then," she threatened at the door.

"We shall be all ready for you," Alma called after her down the steps.

"Well, Alma?" her mother asked, when the door closed upon them.

"She doesn't know any more about *art*," said Alma, "than—nothing at all. But she's jolly and good-hearted. She praised everything that was bad in my sketches, and said she was going to take lessons herself. When a person talks about taking lessons, as if they could learn it, you know where they belong artistically."

Mrs. Leighton shook her head with a sigh. "I wish I knew where they belonged financially. We shall have to get in two girls at once. I shall have to go out the first thing in the morning, and then our troubles will begin."

"Well, didn't you want them to begin? I will stay home and help you get ready. Our prosperity couldn't begin without the troubles, if you mean boarders, and boarders mean servants. I shall be very glad to be afflicted with a cook for a while myself."

"Yes; but we don't know anything about these people, or whether they will be able to pay us. Did she talk as if they were well off?"

"She talked as if they were poor; poo' she called it."

"Yes, how queerly she pronounced," said Mrs. Leighton. "Well, I ought to have told them that I required the first week in advance."

"Mamma! If *that's* the way you're going to act——"

"Oh, of course, I couldn't, after he wouldn't let her bargain for the rooms. I didn't like that."

"I did. And you can see that they were perfect

ladies ; or at least one of them." Alma laughed at herself, but her mother did not notice.

"Their being ladies won't help if they've got no money. It'll make it all the worse."

"Very well, then ; we have no money, either. We're a match for them any day there. We can show them that two can play at that game."

### III.

ANGUS BEATON'S studio looked at first glance like many other painters' studios. A grey wall quadrangularly vaulted to a large north light; casts of feet, hands, faces hung to nails about; prints, sketches in oil and water-colour stuck here and there lower down; a rickety table, with paint and palettes and bottles of varnish and siccative tossed comfortlessly on it; an easel, with a strip of some faded mediæval silk trailing from it; a lay figure simpering in incomplete nakedness, with its head on one side, and a stocking on one leg, and a Japanese dress dropped before it; dusty rugs and skins kicking over the varnished floor; canvases faced to the mop-board; an open trunk overflowing with costumes: these features one might notice anywhere. But besides there was a bookcase with an unusual number of books in it, and there was an open colonial writing-desk, claw-footed, brass-handled, and scutcheoned, with foreign periodicals—French and English—littering its leaf, and some pages of manuscript scattered among them. Above all, there was a sculptor's revolving stand, supporting a bust which Beaton was modelling, with an eye fixed as simul-

taneously as possible on the clay and on the head of the old man who sat on the platform beside it.

Few men have been able to get through the world with several gifts to advantage in all; and most men seem handicapped for the race if they have more than one. But they are apparently immensely interested as well as distracted by them. When Beaton was writing, he would have agreed, up to a certain point, with any one who said literature was his proper expression; but then, when he was painting, up to a certain point, he would have maintained against the world that he was a colourist and supremely a colourist. At the certain point in either art he was apt to break away in a frenzy of disgust, and wreak himself upon some other. In these moods he sometimes designed elevations of buildings, very striking, very original, very *chic*, very everything but habitable. It was in this way that he had tried his hand on sculpture, which he had at first approached rather slightly as a mere decorative accessory of architecture. But it had grown in his respect till he maintained that the accessory business ought to be all the other way: that temples should be raised to enshrine statues, not statues made to ornament temples; that was putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance. This was when he had carried a plastic study so far that the sculptors who saw it said that Beaton might have been an architect, but would certainly never be a sculptor. At the same time he did some hurried, nervous things that had a popular charm,

and that sold in plaster reproductions, to the profit of another. Beaton justly despised the popular charm in these, as well as in the paintings he sold from time to time ; he said it was flat burglary to have taken money for them, and he would have been living almost wholly upon the bounty of the old tombstone-cutter in Syracuse if it had not been for the syndicate letters which he supplied to Fulkerson for ten dollars a week.

They were very well done, but he hated doing them after the first two or three, and had to be punched up for them by Fulkerson, who did not cease to prize them, and who never failed to punch him up. Beaton being what he was, Fulkerson was his creditor as well as patron ; and Fulkerson being what he was, had an enthusiastic patience with the elusive, facile, adaptable, unpractical nature of Beaton. He was very proud of his art-letters, as he called them ; but then Fulkerson was proud of everything he secured for his syndicate. The fact that he had secured it gave it value ; he felt as if he had written it himself.

One art trod upon another's heels with Beaton. The day before he had rushed upon canvas the conception of a picture which he said to himself was glorious, and to others (at the *table d'hôte* of Maroni) was not bad. He had worked at it in a fury till the light failed him, and he execrated the dying day. But he lit his lamp, and transferred the process of his thinking from the canvas to the opening of the syndicate letter which he knew Fulkerson

would be coming for in the morning. He remained talking so long after dinner in the same strain as he had painted and written in that he could not finish his letter that night. The next morning, while he was making his tea for breakfast, the postman brought him a letter from his father enclosing a little cheque, and begging him with tender, almost deferential, urgency to come as lightly upon him as possible, for just now his expenses were very heavy. It brought tears of shame into Beaton's eyes—the fine smouldering, floating eyes that many ladies admired, under the thick bang—and he said to himself that if he were half a man he would go home and go to work cutting grave-stones in his father's shop. But he would wait, at least, to finish his picture; and as a sop to his conscience, to stay its immediate ravening, he resolved to finish that syndicate letter first, and borrow enough money from Fulkerson to be able to send his father's cheque back; or if not that, then to return the sum of it partly in Fulkerson's cheque. While he still teemed with both of these good intentions the old man from whom he was modelling his head of Judas came, and Beaton saw that he must get through with him before he finished either the picture or the letter; he would have to pay him for the time anyway. He utilised the remorse with which he was tingling to give his Judas an expression which he found novel in the treatment of that character—a look of such touching, appealing self-aborrence that Beaton's artistic joy in it amounted to rapture; between the breathless moments when he worked in

dead silence for an effect that was trying to escape him, he sang and whistled fragments of comic opera.

In one of the hushes there came a blow on the outside of the door that made Beaton jump, and swear with a modified profanity that merged itself in apostrophic prayer. He knew it must be Fulkerson, and after roaring, "Come in!" he said to the model, "That'll do this morning, Lindau."

Fulkerson squared his feet in front of the bust, and compared it by fleeting glances with the old man as he got stiffly up, and suffered Beaton to help him on with his thin shabby overcoat.

"Can you come to-morrow, Lindau?"

"No, not to-morrow, Mr. Peaton. I haf to zit for the young ladties."

"Oh!" said Beaton. "Wetmore's class? Is Miss Leighton doing you?"

"I don't know their namess," Lindau began, when Fulkerson said——

"Hope you haven't forgotten mine, Mr. Lindau? I met you with Mr. March at Maroni's one night." Fulkerson offered him a universally shakable hand.

"Oh yes! I am gladt to zee you again, Mr. Vulkerzon. And Mr. Marge—he don't zeem to gome any more?"

"Up to his eyes in work. Been moving on from Boston and getting settled, and starting in on our enterprise. Beaton here hasn't got a very flattering likeness of you, hey? Well, good morning," he said, for Lindau appeared not to have heard him, and was escaping with a bow through the door.

Beaton lit a cigarette which he pinched nervously between his lips before he spoke. "You've come for that letter, I suppose, Fulkerson? It isn't done."

Fulkerson turned from staring at the bust to which he had mounted. "What you fretting about that letter for? I don't want your letter."

Beaton stopped biting his cigarette, and looked at him. "Don't want my letter? Oh, very good!" he bristled up. He took his cigarette from his lips, and blew the smoke through his nostrils, and then looked at Fulkerson.

"No; *I* don't want your letter; I want *you*." Beaton disdained to ask an explanation, but he internally lowered his crest, while he continued to look at Fulkerson without changing his defiant countenance. This suited Fulkerson well enough, and he went on with relish: "I'm going out of the syndicate business, old man, and I'm on a new thing." He put his leg over the back of a chair and rested his foot on its seat, and with one hand in his pocket, he laid the scheme of *Every Other Week* before Beaton with the help of the other. The artist went about the room, meanwhile, with an effect of indifference which by no means offended Fulkerson. He took some water into his mouth from a tumbler, which he blew in a fine mist over the head of Judas, before swathing it in a dirty cotton cloth; he washed his brushes and set his palette; he put up on his easel the picture he had blocked on the day before, and stared at it with a gloomy face; then he gathered the sheets of his

unfinished letter together and slid them into a drawer of his writing-desk. By the time he had finished and turned again to Fulkerson, Fulkerson was saying: "I did think we could have the first number out by New-Year's; but it will take longer than that—a month longer; but I'm not sorry, for the holidays kill everything; and by February, or the middle of February, people will get their breath again, and begin to look round and ask what's new. Then we'll reply in the language of Shakespeare and Milton, *Every Other Week*; and don't you forget it." He took down his leg and asked, "Got a pipe of 'baccy anywhere?"

Beaton nodded at a clay stem sucking out of a Japanese vase of bronze on his mantel. "There's yours," he said; and Fulkerson said, "Thanks," and filled the pipe, and sat down and began to smoke tranquilly.

Beaton saw that he would have to speak now. "And what do you want with me?"

"You? Oh yes—" Fulkerson humorously dramatised a return to himself from a pensive absence. "Want you for the art department."

Beaton shook his head. "I'm not your man, Fulkerson," he said compassionately. "You want a more practical hand; one that's in touch with what's going. I'm getting further and further away from this century and its claptrap. I don't believe in your enterprise; I don't respect it, and I won't have anything to do with it. It would—choke me, that kind of thing."

"That's all right," said Fulkerson. He esteemed a man who was not going to let himself go cheap. "Or if it isn't, we can make it. You and March will pull together first-rate. I don't care how much ideal you put into the thing; the more the better. I can look after the other end of the schooner myself."

"You don't understand me," said Beaton. "I'm not trying to get a rise out of you. I'm in earnest. What you want is some man who can have patience with mediocrity putting on the style of genius, and with genius turning mediocrity on his hands. I haven't any luck with men; I don't get on with them; I'm not popular." Beaton recognised the fact with the satisfaction which it somehow always brings to human pride.

"So much the better!" Fulkerson was ready for him at this point. "I don't want you to work the old established racket—the reputations. When I want them I'll go to them with a pocketful of rocks—knock-down argument. But my idea is to deal with the volunteer material. Look at the way the periodicals are carried on now! Names! names! names! In a country that's just boiling over with literary and artistic ability of every kind the new fellows have no chance. The editors all engage their material. I don't believe there are fifty volunteer contributions printed in a year in all the New York magazines. It's all wrong; it's suicidal. *Every Other Week* is going back to the good old anonymous system, the only fair system. It's worked well in literature, and it will work well in art."

"It *won't* work well in art," said Beaton. "There you have a totally different set of conditions. What you'll get by inviting volunteer illustrations will be a lot of amateur trash. And how are you going to submit your literature for illustration? It can't be done. At any rate, *I* won't undertake to do it."

"We'll get up a School of Illustration," said Fulkerson, with cynical security. "You can read the things and explain 'em, and your pupils can make their sketches under your eye. They wouldn't be much further out than most illustrations are if they never knew what they were illustrating. You might select from what comes in and make up a sort of pictorial variations to the literature without any particular reference to it. Well, I understand you to accept?"

"No, you don't."

"That is, to consent to help us with your advice and criticism. That's all I want. It won't commit you to anything; and you can be as anonymous as anybody." At the door Fulkerson added: "By the way, the new man—the fellow that's taken my old syndicate business—will want you to keep on; but I guess he's going to try to beat you down on the price of the letters. He's going in for retrenchment. I brought along a cheque for this one; I'm to pay for that." He offered Beaton an envelope.

"I can't take it, Fulkerson. The letter's paid for already." Fulkerson stepped forward and laid the envelope on the table among the tubes of paint.

"It isn't the letter merely. I thought you

wouldn't object to a little advance on your *Every Other Week* work till you kind of got started."

Beaton remained inflexible. "It can't be done, Fulkerson. Don't I tell you I can't sell myself out to a thing I don't believe in? Can't you understand that?"

"Oh yes; I can understand that first-rate. I don't want to buy you; I want to borrow you. It's all right. See? Come round when you can; I'd like to introduce you to old March. That's going to be our address." He put a card on the table beside the envelope, and Beaton allowed him to go without making him take the cheque back. He had remembered his father's plea; that unnerved him, and he promised himself again to return his father's poor little cheque and to work on that picture and give it to Fulkerson for the cheque he had left and for his back debts. He resolved to go to work on the picture at once; he had set his palette for it; but first he looked at Fulkerson's cheque. It was for only fifty dollars, and the canny Scotch blood in Beaton rebelled; he could not let this picture go for any such money; he felt a little like a man whose generosity has been trifled with. The conflict of emotions broke him up, and he could not work.

#### IV.

THE day wasted away in Beaton's hands; at half-past four o'clock he went out to tea at the house of a lady who was At Home that afternoon from four till seven. By this time Beaton was in possession of one of those other selves, of which we each have several about us, and was again the laconic, staccato, rather worldlified young artist whose moments of a controlled utterance and a certain distinction of manner had commended him to Mrs. Horn's fancy in the summer at St. Barnaby.

Mrs. Horn's rooms were large, and they never seemed very full, though this perhaps was because people were always so quiet. The ladies, who outnumbered the men ten to one, as they always do at a New York tea, were dressed in sympathy with the low tone every one spoke in, and with the subdued light which gave a crepuscular uncertainty to the few objects, the dim pictures, the unexcited upholstery, of the rooms. One breathed free of bric-à-brac there, and the new-comer breathed softly as one does on going into church after service has begun. This might be a suggestion from the voiceless behaviour of the man-servant who let you in, but it

was also because Mrs. Horn's At Home was a ceremony, a decorum, and not festival. At far greater houses there was more gaiety, at richer houses there was more freedom; the suppression at Mrs. Horn's was a personal, not a social, effect; it was an efflux of her character, demure, silentious, vague, but very correct.

Beaton easily found his way to her around the grouped skirts and among the detached figures, and received a pressure of welcome from the hand which she momentarily relaxed from the teapot. She sat behind a table put crosswise of a remote corner, and offered tea to people whom a niece of hers received provisionally or sped finally in the outer room. They did not usually take tea, and when they did they did not usually drink it; but Beaton was feverishly glad of his cup; he took rum and lemon in it, and stood talking at Mrs. Horn's side till the next arrival should displace him: he talked in his French manner.

"I have been hoping to see you," she said. "I wanted to ask you about the Leightons. Did they really come?"

"I believe so. They are in town—yes. I haven't seen them."

"Then you don't know how they're getting on—that pretty creature, with her cleverness, and poor Mrs. Leighton? I was afraid they were venturing on a rash experiment. Do you know where they are?"

"In West Eleventh Street somewhere. Miss Leighton is in Mr. Wetmore's class."

"I must look them up. Do you know their number?"

"Not at the moment. I can find out."

"Do," said Mrs. Horn. "What courage they must have, to plunge into New York as they've done! I really didn't think they would. I wonder if they've succeeded in getting anybody into their house yet?"

"I don't know," said Beaton.

"I discouraged their coming all I could," she sighed, "and I suppose you did too. But it's quite useless trying to make people in a place like St. Barnaby understand how it is in town."

"Yes," said Beaton. He stirred his tea, while inwardly he tried to believe that he had really discouraged the Leightons from coming to New York. Perhaps the vexation of his failure made him call Mrs. Horn in his heart a fraud.

"Yes," she went on. "It is very, very hard. And when they won't understand, and rush on their doom, you feel that they are going to hold you respons——"

Mrs. Horn's eyes wandered from Beaton; her voice faltered in the faded interest of her remark, and then rose with renewed vigour in greeting a lady who came up and stretched her glove across the teacups.

Beaton got himself away and out of the house with a much briefer adieu to the niece than he had meant to make. The patronising compassion of Mrs. Horn for the Leightons filled him with indigna-

tion toward her, toward himself. There was no reason why he should not have ignored them as he had done ; but there was a feeling. It was his nature to be careless, and he had been spoiled into recklessness ; he neglected everybody, and only remembered them when it suited his whim or his convenience ; but he fiercely resented the inattention of others toward himself. He had no scruple about breaking an engagement or failing to keep an appointment ; he made promises without thinking of their fulfilment, and not because he was a faithless person, but because he was imaginative, and expected at the time to do what he said, but was fickle, and so did not. As most of his shortcomings were of a society sort, no great harm was done to anybody else. He had contracted somewhat the circle of his acquaintance by what some people called his rudeness, but most people treated it as his oddity, and were patient with it. One lady said she valued his coming when he said he would come because it had the charm of the unexpected. "Only it shows that it isn't always the unexpected that happens," she explained.

It did not occur to him that his behaviour was immoral ; he did not realise that it was creating a reputation if not a character for him. While we are still young we do not realise that our actions have this effect. It seems to us that people will judge us from what we think and feel. Later we find out that this is impossible ; perhaps we find it out too late ; some of us never find it out at all.

In spite of his shame about the Leightons Beaton had no present intention of looking them up or sending Mrs. Horn their address. As a matter of fact, he never did send it ; but he happened to meet Mr. Wetmore and his wife at the restaurant where he dined, and he got it of the painter for himself. He did not ask him how Miss Leighton was getting on ; but Wetmore launched out, with Alma for a tacit text, on the futility of women generally going in for art. "Even when they have talent they've got too much against them. Where a girl doesn't seem very strong, like Miss Leighton, no amount of *chic* is going to help."

His wife disputed him on behalf of her sex, as women always do.

"No, Dolly," he persisted ; "she'd better be home milking the cows and leading the horse to water."

"Do you think she'd better be up till two in the morning at balls and going all day to receptions and luncheons ?"

"Oh, I guess it isn't a question of that, even if she weren't drawing. You knew them at home," he said to Beaton.

"Yes."

"I remember. Her mother said you suggested me. Well, the girl has some notion of it ; there's no doubt about that. But—she's a woman. The trouble with these talented girls is that they're *all* woman. If they weren't, there wouldn't be much chance for the men, Beaton. But we've got Provi-

dence on our own side from the start. I'm able to watch all their inspirations with perfect composure. I know just how soon it's going to end in nervous breakdown. Somebody ought to marry them all and put them out of their misery."

"And what will you do with your students who are married already?" his wife said. She felt that she had let him go on long enough.

"Oh, they ought to get divorced."

"You ought to be ashamed to take their money if that's what you think of them."

"My dear, I have a wife to support."

Beaton intervened with a question. "Do you mean that Miss Leighton isn't standing it very well?"

"How do I know? She isn't the kind that bends; she's the kind that breaks."

After a little silence Mrs. Wetmore asked, "Won't you come home with us, Mr. Beaton?"

"Thank you; no. I have an engagement."

"I don't see why that should prevent you," said Wetmore. "But you always *were* a punctilious cuss. Well!"

Beaton lingered over his cigar; but no one else whom he knew came in, and he yielded to the three-fold impulse of conscience, of curiosity, of inclination, in going to call at the Leightons'. He asked for the ladies, and the maid showed him into the parlour, where he found Mrs. Leighton and Miss Woodburn.

The widow met him with a welcome neatly marked by resentment; she meant him to feel that

his not coming sooner had been noticed. Miss Woodburn bubbled and gurgled on, and did what she could to mitigate his punishment, but she did not feel authorised to stay it, till Mrs. Leighton, by studied avoidance of her daughter's name, obliged Beaton to ask for her. Then Miss Woodburn caught up her work, and said, "Ah'll go and tell her, Mrs. Leighton." At the top of the stairs she found Alma, and Alma tried to make it seem as if she had not been standing there. "Mah goodness, chald ! there's the handsomest young man asking for you down there you evah saw. Ah told you' mothah Ah would come up fo' you."

"What—who is it?"

"Don't you *know*? But ho' could you? He's got the most beautiful eyes, and he wea's his hai' in a bang, and he talks English like it was something else, and his name's Mr. Beaton."

"Did he—ask for me?" said Alma, with a dreamy tone. She put her hand on the stairs rail, and a little shiver ran over her.

"Didn't I tell you? Of coase he did! And you ought to go raght down if you want to save the poo' fellah's lahfe; you' mothah's just freezin' him to death."

## V.

"*SHE is?*" cried Alma. "Tchik!" She flew downstairs, and flitted swiftly into the room, and fluttered up to Beaton, and gave him a crushing hand-shake.

"How *very* kind of you to come and see us, Mr. Beaton! When did you come to New York? Don't you find it warm here? We've only just lighted the furnace, but with this mild weather it seems too early. Mamma *does* keep it so hot!" She rushed about opening doors and shutting registers, and then came back and sat facing him from the sofa with a mask of radiant cordiality. "How *have* you been since we saw you?"

"Very well," said Beaton. "I hope you're well, Miss Leighton?"

"Oh, *perfectly*! I think New York agrees with us both wonderfully. I never knew such air. And to think of our not having snow yet! I should think everybody would want to come here! Why don't *you* come, Mr. Beaton?"

Beaton lifted his eyes and looked at her. "I—I live in New York," he faltered.

"In New York *city*!" she exclaimed.

"Surely, Alma," said her mother, "you remember Mr. Beaton's telling us he lived in New York."

"But I thought you came from Rochester; or was it Syracuse? I always get those places mixed up."

"Probably I told you my father lived at Syracuse. I've been in New York ever since I came home from Paris," said Beaton, with the confusion of a man who feels himself played upon by a woman.

"From Paris!" Alma echoed, leaning forward, with her smiling mask tight on. "Wasn't it Munich, where you studied?"

"I was at Munich too. I met Wetmore there."

"Oh, *do* you know Mr. Wetmore?"

"Why, Alma," her mother interposed again, "it was Mr. Beaton who *told* you of Mr. Wetmore."

"Was it? Why, yes, to be sure. It was Mrs. Horn; she suggested Mr. Ilcomb. I remember now. I can't thank you enough for *having* sent me to Mr. Wetmore, Mr. Beaton. Isn't he delightful? Oh yes, I'm a perfect Wetmorian, I can assure you. The whole class is the same way."

"I just met him and Mrs. Wetmore at dinner," said Beaton, attempting the recovery of something that he had lost through the girl's shining ease and steely sprightliness. She seemed to him so smooth and hard, with a repellent elasticity from which he was flung off. "I hope you're not working too hard, Miss Leighton?"

"Oh no! I enjoy every minute of it, and grow stronger on it. Do I look very much wasted away?"

She looked him full in the face, brilliantly smiling, and intentionally beautiful.

"No," he said, with a slow sadness; "I never saw you looking better."

"Poor Mr. Beaton!" she said, in recognition of his doleful tune. "It seems to be quite a blow."

"Oh no——"

"I remember all the good advice you used to give me about not working too hard, and probably it's that that's saved my life—that and the house-hunting. Has mamma told you of our adventures in getting settled? Some time we must. It was such fun! And didn't you think we were fortunate to get such a pretty house? You must see both our parlours."

She jumped up, and her mother followed her with a bewildered look as she ran into the back parlour and flashed up the gas.

"Come in here, Mr. Beaton. I want to show you the great feature of the house." She opened the low windows that gave upon a glazed veranda stretching across the end of the room. "Just think of this in New York! You can't see it very well at night, but when the southern sun pours in here all the afternoon——"

"Yes, I can imagine it," he said. He glanced up at the bird-cage hanging from the roof. "I suppose Gypsy enjoys it."

"You remember Gypsy?" she said; and she made a cooing, kissing little noise up at the bird, who responded drowsily. "Poor old Gypsum! Well, he *shan't* be disturbed. Yes, it's Gyp's de-

light, and Colonel Woodburn likes to write here in the morning. Think of us having a real live author in the house! And Miss Woodburn: I'm so glad you've seen her! They're Southern people."

"Yes, that was obvious in her case."

"From her accent? Isn't it fascinating? I didn't believe I could ever endure Southerners, but we're like one family with the Woodburns. I should think you'd want to paint Miss Woodburn. Don't you think her colouring is delicious? And such a quaint kind of eighteenth-century type of beauty! But she's perfectly lovely every way, and everything she says is so funny. The Southerners seem to be such great talkers; better than we are, don't you think?"

"I don't know," said Beaton, in pensive discouragement. He was sensible of being manipulated, operated, but he was helpless to escape from the performer or to fathom her motives. His pensiveness passed into gloom, and was degenerating into sulky resentment when he went away, after several failures to get back to the old ground he had held in relation to Alma. He retrieved something of it with Mrs. Leighton; but Alma glittered upon him to the last with a keen impenetrable candour, a childlike singleness of glance, covering unfathomable reserve.

"Well, Alma," said her mother, when the door had closed upon him.

"Well, mother." Then, after a moment, she said, with a rush: "Did you think I was going to let him

suppose we were piqued at his not coming? Did you suppose I was going to let him patronise us, or think that we were in the least dependent on his favour or friendship?"

Her mother did not attempt to answer her. She merely said, "I shouldn't think he would come any more."

"Well, we have got on so far without him; perhaps we can live through the rest of the winter."

"I couldn't help feeling sorry for him. He was quite stupefied. I could see that he didn't know what to make of you."

"He's not required to make anything of me," said Alma.

"Do you think he really believed you had forgotten all those things?"

"Impossible to say, mamma."

"Well, I don't think it was quite right, Alma."

"I'll leave him to you the next time. Miss Woodburn said you were freezing him to death when I came down."

"That was quite different. But there won't be any next time, I'm afraid," sighed Mrs. Leighton.

Beaton went home feeling sure there would not. He tried to read when he got to his room; but Alma's looks, tones, gestures, whirled through and through the woof of the story like shuttles; he could not keep them out, and he fell asleep at last, not because he forgot them, but because he forgave them. He was able to say to himself that he had been justly cut off from kindness which he knew

how to value in losing it. He did not expect ever to right himself in Alma's esteem ; but he hoped some day to let her know that he had understood. It seemed to him that it would be a good thing if she should find it out after his death. He imagined her being touched by it under those circumstances.

## VI.

IN the morning it seemed to Beaton that he had done himself injustice. When he uncovered his Judas and looked at it, he could not believe that the man who was capable of such work deserved the punishment Miss Leighton had inflicted upon him. He still forgave her, but in the presence of a thing like that he could not help respecting himself ; he believed that if she could see it she would be sorry that she had cut herself off from his acquaintance. He carried this strain of conviction all through his syndicate letter, which he now took out of his desk and finished, with an increasing security of his opinions and a mounting severity in his judgments. He retaliated upon the general condition of art among us the pangs of wounded vanity, which Alma had made him feel, and he folded up his manuscript and put it in his pocket, almost healed of his humiliation. He had been able to escape from its sting so entirely while he was writing that the notion of making his life more and more literary commended itself to him. As it was now evident that the future was to be one of renunciation, of self-forgetting, an oblivion tinged with bitterness, he formlessly

reasoned in favour of reconsidering his resolution against Fulkerson's offer. One must call it reasoning, but it was rather that swift internal dramatisation which constantly goes on in persons of excitable sensibilities, and which now seemed to sweep Beaton physically along toward the *Every Other Week* office, and carried his mind with lightning celerity on to a time when he should have given that journal such quality and authority in matters of art as had never been enjoyed by any in America before. With the prosperity which he made attend his work he changed the character of the enterprise, and with Fulkerson's enthusiastic support he gave the public an art journal of as high grade as *Les Lettres et les Arts*, and very much that sort of thing. All this involved now the unavailing regret of Alma Leighton, and now his reconciliation with her : they were married in Grace Church, because Beaton had once seen a marriage there, and had intended to paint a picture of it some time.

Nothing in these fervid fantasies prevented his responding with due dryness to Fulkerson's cheery "Hello, old man!" when he found himself in the building fitted up for the *Every Other Week* office. Fulkerson's room was back of the smaller one occupied by the book-keeper ; they had been respectively the reception-room and dining-room of the little place in its dwelling-house days, and they had been simply and tastefully treated in their transformation into business purposes. The narrow old trim of the doors and windows had been kept, and

the quaintly ugly marble mantels. The architect had said, Better let them stay: they expressed epoch, if not character.

"Well, have you come round to go to work? Just hang up your coat on the floor anywhere," Fulkerson went on.

"I've come to bring you that letter," said Beaton, all the more haughtily because he found that Fulkerson was not alone when he welcomed him in these free and easy terms. There was a quiet-looking man, rather stout, and a little above the middle height, with a full, close-cropped iron-grey beard, seated beyond the table where Fulkerson tilted himself back, with his knees set against it; and leaning against the mantel there was a young man with a singularly gentle face, in which the look of goodness qualified and transfigured a certain simplicity. His large blue eyes were somewhat prominent; and his rather narrow face was drawn forward in a nose a little too long perhaps, if it had not been for the full chin deeply cut below the lip, and jutting firmly forward.

"Introduce you to Mr. March, our editor, Mr. Beaton," Fulkerson said, rolling his head in the direction of the elder man; and then nodding it toward the younger, he said, "Mr. Dryfoos, Mr. Beaton." Beaton shook hands with March, and then with Mr. Dryfoos, and Fulkerson went on gaily: "We were just talking of you, Beaton—well, you know the old saying. Mr. March, as I told you, is our editor, and Mr. Dryfoos has charge

of the publishing department—he's the counting-room incarnate, the source of power, the fountain of corruption, the element that prevents journalism being the high and holy thing that it would be if there were no money in it." Mr. Dryfoos turned his large mild eyes upon Beaton, and laughed with the uneasy concession which people make to a character when they do not quite approve of the character's language. "What Mr. March and I are trying to do is to carry on this thing so that there *won't* be any money in it—or very little; and we're planning to give the public a better article for the price than it's ever had before. Now here's a dummy we've had made up for *Every Other Week*, and as we've decided to adopt it, we would naturally like your opinion of it, so's to know what opinion to have of *you*." He reached forward and pushed toward Beaton a volume a little above the size of the ordinary duodecimo book; its ivory white pebbled paper cover was prettily illustrated with a water-coloured design irregularly washed over the greater part of its surface: quite across the page at top, and narrowing from right to left as it descended. In the triangular space left blank the title of the periodical and the publisher's imprint were tastefully lettered so as to be partly covered by the background of colour.

"It's like some of those *Tartarin* books of Daudet's," said Beaton, looking at it with more interest than he suffered to be seen. "But it's a book, not a magazine." He opened its pages of thick mellow

white paper, with uncut leaves, the first few pages experimentally printed in the type intended to be used, and illustrated with some sketches drawn into and over the text, for the sake of the effect.

"A Daniel—a Daniel come to judgment! Sit down, Dan'el, and take it easy." Fulkerson pushed a chair toward Beaton, who dropped into it. "You're right, Dan'el; it's a book, to all practical intents and purposes. And what we propose to do with the American public is to give it twenty-four books like this a year—a complete library—for the absurd sum of six dollars. We don't intend to sell 'em—it's no name for the transaction—but to *give* 'em. And what we want to get out of you—beg, borrow, buy, or steal from you—is an opinion whether we shall make the American public this princely present in paper covers like this, or in some sort of flexible boards, so they can set them on the shelf and say no more about it. Now, Dan'el, come to judgment, as our respected friend Shylock remarked."

Beaton had got done looking at the dummy, and he dropped it on the table before Fulkerson, who pushed it away, apparently to free himself from partiality. "I don't know anything about the business side, and I can't tell about the effect of either style on the sales; but you'll spoil the whole character of the cover if you use anything thicker than that thickish paper."

"All right; very good; first-rate. The ayes have it. Paper it is. I don't mind telling you that we had decided for that paper before you came in. Mr.

March wanted it, because he felt in his bones just the way you do about it, and Mr. Dryfoos wanted it, because he's the counting-room incarnate, and it's cheaper; and I wanted it, because I always like to go with the majority. Now what do you think of that little design itself?"

"The sketch?" Beaton pulled the book toward him again and looked at it again. "Rather decorative. Drawing's not remarkable. Graceful; rather nice." He pushed the book away again, and Fulkerson pulled it to his side of the table.

"Well, that's a piece of that amateur trash you despise so much. I went to a painter I know—by the way, he was guilty of suggesting you for this thing, but I told him I was ahead of him—and I got him to submit my idea to one of his class, and that's the result. Well, now, there ain't anything in this world that sells a book like a pretty cover, and we're going to have a pretty cover for *Every Other Week* every time. We've cut loose from the old traditional quarto literary newspaper size, and we've cut loose from the old two-column big page magazine size; we're going to have a duodecimo page, clear black print, and paper that'll make your mouth water; and we're going to have a fresh illustration for the cover of each number, and we ain't a-going to give the public any rest at all. Sometimes we're going to have a delicate little landscape like this, and sometimes we're going to have an indelicate little figure, or as much so as the law will allow."

The young man leaning against the mantelpiece blushed a sort of protest.

March smiled and said dryly, "Those are the numbers that Mr. Fulkerson is going to edit himself."

"Exactly. And Mr. Beaton here is going to supply the floating females, gracefully airing themselves against a sunset or something of that kind." Beaton frowned in embarrassment, while Fulkerson went on philosophically. "It's astonishing how you fellows can keep it up at this stage of the proceedings; you can paint things that your harshest critic would be ashamed to describe accurately; you're as free as the theatre. But that's neither here nor there. What I'm after is the fact that we're going to have variety in our title-pages, and we are going to have novelty in the illustrations of the body of the book. March, here, if he had his own way, wouldn't have any illustrations at all."

"Not because I don't like them, Mr. Beaton," March interposed, "but because I like them too much. I find that I look at the pictures in an illustrated article, but I don't read the article very much, and I fancy that's the case with most other people. You've got to doing them so prettily that you take our eyes off the literature, if you don't take our minds off."

"Like the society beauties on the stage: people go in for the beauty so much that they don't know what the play is. But the box office gets there all the same, and that's what Mr. Dryfoos wants." Fulkerson looked up gaily at Mr. Dryfoos, who smiled deprecatingly.

"It was different," March went on, "when the illustrations used to be bad. Then the text had some chance."

"Old legitimate drama days, when ugliness and genius combined to storm the galleries," said Fulkerson.

"We can still make them bad enough," said Beaton, ignoring Fulkerson in his remark to March.

Fulkerson took the reply upon himself. "Well, you needn't make 'em so bad as the old-style cuts; but you can make them unobtrusive, modestly retiring. We've got hold of a process something like that those French fellows gave Daudet thirty-five thousand dollars to write a novel to use with; kind of thing that begins at one side, or one corner, and spreads in a sort of dim religious style over the print till you can't tell which is which. Then we've got a notion that where the pictures don't behave quite so sociably, they can be dropped into the text, like a little casual remark, don't you know, or a comment that has some connection, or may be none at all, with what's going on in the story. Something like this." Fulkerson took away one knee from the table long enough to open the drawer, and pull from it a book that he shoved toward Beaton. "That's a Spanish book I happened to see at Brentano's, and I froze to it on account of the pictures. I guess they're pretty good."

"Do you expect to get such drawings in this country?" asked Beaton, after a glance at the book. "Such character—such drama? You won't."

"Well, I'm not so sure," said Fulkerson, "come to get our amateurs warmed up to the work. But what I want is to get the physical effect, so to speak—get that-sized picture into our page, and set the fashion of it. I shouldn't care if the illustration was sometimes confined to an initial letter and a tail-piece."

"Couldn't be done here. We haven't the touch. We're good in some things, but this isn't in our way," said Beaton stubbornly. "I can't think of a man who could do it; that is, amongst those that would."

"Well, think of some woman, then," said Fulkerson easily. "I've got a notion that the women could help us out on this thing, come to get 'em interested. There ain't anything so popular as female fiction; why not try female art?"

"The females themselves have been supposed to have been trying it for a good while," March suggested; and Mr. Dryfoos laughed nervously; Beaton remained solemnly silent.

"Yes, I know," Fulkerson assented. "But I don't mean that kind exactly. What we want to do is to work the *ewig Weibliche* in this concern. We want to make a magazine that will go for the women's fancy every time. I don't mean with recipes for cooking and fashions and personal gossip about authors and society, but real high-tone literature that will show women triumphing in all the stories, or else suffering tremendously. We've got to recognise that women form three-fourths of the

reading public in this country, and go for their tastes and their sensibilities and their sex-piety along the whole line. They do like to think that women can do things better than men; and if we can let it leak out and get around in the papers that the managers of *Every Other Week* couldn't stir a peg in the line of the illustration they wanted till they got a lot of God-gifted girls to help them, it'll make the fortunes of the thing. See?"

He looked sunnily round at the other men, and March said: "You ought to be in charge of a Siamese white elephant, Fulkerson. It's a disgrace to be connected with you."

"It seems to me," said Beaton, "that you'd better get a God-gifted girl for your art editor."

Fulkerson leaned alertly forward, and touched him on the shoulder, with a compassionate smile. "My dear boy, they haven't got the genius of organisation. It takes a very masculine man for that—a man who combines the most subtle and refined sympathies with the most forceful purposes and the most ferruginous will power. Which his name is Angus Beaton, and here he sets!"

The others laughed with Fulkerson at his gross burlesque of flattery, and Beaton frowned sheepishly. "I suppose you understand this man's style," he growled toward March.

"They do, my son," said Fulkerson. "They know that I cannot tell a lie." He pulled out his watch, and then got suddenly upon his feet.

"It's quarter of twelve, and I've got an appoint-

ment. Beaton rose too, and Fulkerson put the two books in his lax hands. "Take these along, Michelangelo Da Vinci, my friend, and put your multitudinous mind on them for about an hour, and let us hear from you to-morrow. We hang upon your decision."

"There's no deciding to be done," said Beaton. "You can't combine the two styles. They'd kill each other."

"A Dan'el, a Dan'el come to judgment! I knew you could help us out! Take 'em along, and tell us which will go the furthest with the *ewig Weibliche*. Dryfoos, I want a word with you." He led the way into the front room, flirting an airy farewell to Beaton with his hand as he went.

## VII.

MARCH and Beaton remained alone together for a moment, and March said : " I hope you *will* think it worth while to take hold with us, Mr. Beaton. Mr. Fulkerson puts it in his own way, of course ; but we really want to make a nice thing of the magazine." He had that timidity of the elder in the presence of the younger man which the younger, preoccupied with his own timidity in the presence of the elder, cannot imagine. Besides, March was aware of the gulf that divided him as a literary man from Beaton as an artist, and he only ventured to feel his way toward sympathy with him. " We want to make it good ; we want to make it high. Fulkerson is right about aiming to please the women, but of course he caricatures the way of going about it."

For answer, Beaton flung out, " I can't go in for a thing I don't understand the plan of."

March took it for granted that he had wounded some exposed sensibility of Beaton's. He continued still more deferentially : " Mr. Fulkerson's notion—I must say the notion is his, evolved from his syndicate experience—is that we shall do best in fiction to confine ourselves to short stories, and make each

number complete in itself. He found that the most successful things he could furnish his newspapers were short stories; we Americans are supposed to excel in writing them; and most people begin with them in fiction; and it's Mr. Fulkerson's idea to work unknown talent, as he says, and so he thinks he can not only get them easily, but can gradually form a school of short-story writers. I can't say I follow him altogether, but I respect his experience. We shall not despise translations of short stories, but otherwise the matter will all be original, and of course it won't all be short stories. We shall use sketches of travel, and essays, and little dramatic studies, and bits of biography and history; but all very light, and always short enough to be completed in a single number. Mr. Fulkerson believes in pictures, and most of the things would be capable of illustration."

"I see," said Beaton.

"I don't know but this is the whole affair," said March, beginning to stiffen a little at the young man's reticence.

"I understand. Thank you for taking the trouble to explain. Good morning." Beaton bowed himself off, without offering to shake hands.

Fulkerson came in after a while from the outer office, and Mr. Dryfoos followed him. "Well, what do you think of our art editor?"

"Is he our art editor?" asked March. "I wasn't quite certain when he left."

"Did he take the books?"

"Yes, he took the books."

"I guess he's all right, then." Fulkerson added, in concession to the umbrage he detected in March, "Beaton has his times of being the greatest ass in the solar system, but he usually takes it out in personal conduct. When it comes to work, he's a regular horse."

"He appears to have compromised for the present by being a perfect mule," said March.

"Well, he's in a transition state," Fulkerson allowed. "He's the man for us. He really understands what we want. You'll see; he'll catch on. That lurid glare of his will wear off in the course of time. He's really a good fellow when you take him off his guard; and he's full of ideas. He's spread out over a good deal of ground at present, and so he's pretty thin; but come to gather him up into a lump, there's a good deal of substance to him. Yes, there is. He's a first-rate critic, and he's a nice fellow with the other artists. They laugh at his universality, but they all like him. He's the best kind of a teacher when he condescends to it; and he's just the man to deal with our volunteer work. Yes, sir, he's a prize. Well, I must go now."

Fulkerson went out of the street door and then came quickly back. "By-the-by, March, I saw that old dynamiter of yours round at Beaton's room yesterday."

"What old dynamiter of mine?"

"That old one-handed Dutchman—friend of your youth—the one we saw at Maroni's——"

"Oh—Lindau!" said March, with a vague pang of self-reproach for having thought of Lindau so little after the first flood of his tender feeling toward him was past.

"Yes, our versatile friend was modelling him as Judas Iscariot. Lindau makes a first-rate Judas, and Beaton has got a big thing in that head if he works the religious people right. But what I was thinking of was this—it struck me just as I was going out of the door: Didn't you tell me Lindau knew forty or fifty different languages?"

"Four or five, yes."

"Well, we won't quarrel about the number. The question is, why not work *him* in the field of foreign literature? *You* can't go over all their reviews and magazines, and he could do the smelling for you, if you could trust his nose. Would he know a good thing?"

"I think he would," said March, on whom the scope of Fulkerson's suggestion gradually opened. "He used to have good taste, and he must know the ground. Why, it's a capital idea, Fulkerson! Lindau wrote very fair English, and he could translate, with a little revision."

"And he would probably work cheap. Well, hadn't you better see him about it? I guess it'll be quite a windfall for him."

"Yes, it will. I'll look him up. Thank you for the suggestion, Fulkerson."

"Oh, don't mention it! I don't mind doing *Every Other Week* a good turn now and then when it comes

in my way." Fulkerson went out again, and this time March was finally left with Mr. Dryfoos.

"Mrs. March was very sorry not to be at home when your sisters called the other day. She wished me to ask if they had any afternoon in particular. There was none on your mother's card."

"No, sir," said the young man, with a flush of embarrassment that seemed habitual with him. "She has no day. She's at home almost every day. She hardly ever goes out."

"Might we come some evening?" March asked. "We should be very glad to do that, if she would excuse the informality. Then I could come *with* Mrs. March."

"Mother isn't very formal," said the young man. "She would be very glad to see you."

"Then we'll come some night this week, if you will let us. When do you expect your father back?"

"Not much before Christmas. He's trying to settle up some things at Moffitt."

"And what do you think of our art editor?" asked March, with a smile, for the change of subject.

"Oh, I don't know much about such things," said the young man, with another of his embarrassed flushes. "Mr. Fulkerson seems to feel sure that he is the one for us."

"Mr. Fulkerson seemed to think that *I* was the one for you, too," said March; and he laughed. "That's what makes me doubt his infallibility. But he couldn't do worse with Mr. Beaton."

Mr. Dryfoos reddened and looked down, as if

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unable or unwilling to cope with the difficulty of making a polite protest against March's self-depreciation. He said after a moment: "It's new business to all of us except Mr. Fulkerson. But I think it will succeed. I think we can do some good in it."

March asked rather absently, "Some good?" Then he added: "Oh yes; I think we can. What do you mean by good? Improve the public taste? Elevate the standard of literature? Give young authors and artists a chance?"

This was the only good that had ever been in March's mind, except the good that was to come in a material way from his success, to himself and to his family.

"I don't know," said the young man; and he looked down in a shamefaced fashion. He lifted his head and looked into March's face. "I suppose I was thinking that some time we might help along. If we were to have those sketches of yours about life in every part of New York——"

March's authorial vanity was tickled. "Fulkerson has been talking to you about them? He seemed to think they would be a card. He believes that there's no subject so fascinating to the general average of people throughout the country as life in New York City; and he liked my notion of doing these things." March hoped that Dryfoos would answer that Fulkerson was perfectly enthusiastic about his notion; but he did not need this stimulus, and at any rate he went on without it. "The fact is, it's something that struck my fancy the moment

I came here ; I found myself intensely interested in the place, and I began to make notes, consciously and unconsciously, at once. Yes, I believe I can get something quite attractive out of it. I don't in the least know what it will be yet, except that it will be very desultory ; and I couldn't at all say when I can get at it. If we postpone the first number till February I might get a little paper into that. Yes, I think it might be a good thing for us," March said, with modest self-appreciation.

"If you can make the comfortable people understand how the uncomfortable people live, it will be a very good thing, Mr. March. Sometimes it seems to me that the only trouble is that we don't know one another well enough ; and that the first thing is to do this." The young fellow spoke with the seriousness in which the beauty of his face resided. Whenever he laughed his face looked weak, even silly. It seemed to be a sense of this that made him hang his head or turn it away at such times.

"That's true," said March, from the surface only. "And then, those phases of low life are immensely picturesque. Of course we must try to get the contrasts of luxury for the sake of the full effect. That won't be so easy. You can't penetrate to the dinner-party of a millionaire under the wing of a detective as you could to a carouse in Mulberry Street, or to his children's nursery with a philanthropist as you can to a street-boy's lodging-house." March laughed, and again the young man turned his head away. "Still, something can be done in that way by tact and patience."

## VIII.

THAT evening March went with his wife to return the call of the Dryfoos ladies. On their way uptown in the Elevated he told her of his talk with young Dryfoos. "I confess I was a little ashamed before him afterward for having looked at the matter so entirely from the æsthetic point of view. But of course, you know, if I went to work at those things with an ethical intention explicitly in mind, I should spoil them."

"Of course," said his wife. She had always heard him say something of this kind about such things.

He went on: "But I suppose that's just the point that such a nature as young Dryfoos' can't get hold of, or keep hold of. We're a queer lot, down there, Isabel—perfect menagerie. If it hadn't been that Fulkerson got us together, and really seems to know what he did it for, I should say he was the oddest stick among us. But when I think of myself and my own crankiness for the literary department; and young Dryfoos, who ought really to be in the pulpit, or a monastery, or something, for publisher; and that young Beaton, who probably hasn't a moral fibre in his composition, for the art man, I

don't know but we could give Fulkerson odds and still beat him in oddity."

His wife heaved a deep sigh of apprehension, of renunciation, of monition. "Well, I'm glad you can feel so light about it, Basil."

"Light? I feel gay! With Fulkerson at the helm, I tell you the rocks and the lee shore had better keep out of the way." He laughed with pleasure in his metaphor. "Just when you think Fulkerson has taken leave of his senses he says or does something that shows he is on the most intimate and inalienable terms with them all the time. You know how I've been worrying over those foreign periodicals, and trying to get some translation from them for the first number? Well, Fulkerson has brought his centipedal mind to bear on the subject, and he's suggested that old German friend of mine I was telling you of—the one I met in the restaurant—the friend of my youth."

"Do you think *he* could do it?" asked Mrs. March sceptically.

"He's a perfect Babel of strange tongues; and he's the very man for the work, and I was ashamed I hadn't thought of him myself, for I suspect he needs the work."

"Well, be careful how you get mixed up with him, then, Basil," said his wife, who had the natural misgiving concerning the friends of her husband's youth that all wives have. "You know the Germans *are* so unscrupulously dependent. You don't know anything about him now."

"I'm not afraid of Lindau," said March. "He was the best and kindest man I ever saw, the most high-minded, the most generous. He lost a hand in the war that helped to save us and keep us possible, and that stump of his is character enough for me."

"Oh, you don't think I could have meant anything *against* him!" said Mrs. March, with the tender fervour that every woman who lived in the time of the war must feel for those who suffered in it. "All that I meant was that I hoped you would not get mixed up with him too much. You're so apt to be carried away by your impulses."

"They didn't carry me very far away in the direction of poor old Lindau, I'm ashamed to think," said March. "I meant all sorts of fine things by him after I met him; and then I forgot him, and I had to be reminded of him by Fulkerson."

She did not answer him, and he fell into a remorseful reverie, in which he rehabilitated Lindau anew, and provided handsomely for his old age. He got him buried with military honours, and had a shaft raised over him, with a medallion likeness by Beaton and an epitaph by himself, by the time they reached Forty-second Street; there was no time to write Lindau's life, however briefly, before the train stopped.

They had to walk up four blocks and then half a block across before they came to the indistinctive brown-stone house where the Dryfooses lived. It was larger than some in the same block, but the next neighbourhood of a huge apartment-house

dwarfed it again. March thought he recognised the very flat in which he had disciplined the surly janitor, but he did not tell his wife; he made her notice the transition character of the street, which had been mostly built up in apartment-houses, with here and there a single dwelling dropped far down beneath and beside them, to that jag-toothed effect on the sky-line so often observable in such New York streets. "I don't know exactly what the old gentleman bought here for," he said, as they waited on the steps after ringing, "unless he expects to turn it into flats by-and-by. Otherwise, I don't believe he'll get his money back."

An Irish serving-man, with a certain surprise that delayed him, said the ladies were at home, and let the Marches in, and then carried their cards upstairs. The drawing-room, where he said they could sit down while he went on this errand, was delicately decorated in white and gold, and furnished with a sort of extravagant good taste; there was nothing to object to the satin furniture, the pale, soft, rich carpet, the pictures, and the bronze and china bric-à-brac, except that their costliness was too evident; everything in the room meant money too plainly, and too much of it. The Marches recognised this in the hoarse whispers which people cannot get their voices above when they try to talk away the interval of waiting in such circumstances; they conjectured from what they had heard of the Dryfooses that this tasteful luxury in nowise expressed their civilisation. "Though

when you come to that," said March, "I don't know that Mrs. Green's gimerackery expresses ours."

"Well, Basil, *I* didn't *take* the gimerackery. That was *your*——"

The rustle of skirts on the stairs without arrested Mrs. March in the well-merited punishment which she never failed to inflict upon her husband when the question of the gimerackery—they always called it that—came up. She rose at the entrance of a bright-looking, pretty-looking, mature, youngish lady, in black silk of a neutral implication, who put out her hand to her, and said, with a very cheery, very lady-like accent, "Mrs. March?" and then added to both of them, while she shook hands with March, and before they could get the name out of their mouths, "No, *not* Miss Dryfoos! Neither of them; nor Mrs. Dryfoos. Mrs. Mandel. The ladies will be down in a moment. Won't you throw off your sacque, Mrs. March? I'm afraid it's rather warm here, coming from the outside."

"I will throw it back, if you'll allow me," said Mrs. March, with a sort of provisionality, as if, pending some uncertainty as to Mrs. Mandel's quality and authority, she did not feel herself justified in going further.

But if she did not know about Mrs. Mandel, Mrs. Mandel seemed to know about her. "Oh, well, do!" she said, with a sort of recognition of the propriety of her caution. "I hope you are feeling a little at home in New York. We heard so much of your trouble in getting a flat, from Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, a true Bostonian doesn't give up quite so soon," said Mrs. March. "But I will say New York doesn't seem so far away, now we're here."

"I'm sure you'll like it. Every one does." Mrs. Mandel added to March, "It's very sharp out, isn't it?"

"Rather sharp. But after our Boston winters I don't know but I ought to repudiate the word."

"Ah, wait till you have been here through March!" said Mrs. Mandel. She began with him, but skilfully transferred the close of her remark, and the little smile of menace that went with it, to his wife.

"Yes," said Mrs. March, "or April, either. Talk about our east winds!"

"Oh, I'm sure they can't be worse than *our* winds," Mrs. Mandel returned caressingly.

"If we escape New York pneumonia," March laughed, "it will only be to fall a prey to New York malaria as soon as the frost is out of the ground."

"Oh, but you know," said Mrs. Mandel, "I think our malaria has really been slandered a little. It's more a matter of drainage—of plumbing. I don't believe it would be possible for malaria to get into *this* house, we've had it gone over so thoroughly."

Mrs. March said, while she tried to divine Mrs. Mandel's position from this statement, "It's certainly the first duty."

"If Mrs. March could have had her way, we should have had the drainage of our whole ward put in order," said her husband, "before we ventured to take a furnished apartment for the winter."

Mrs. Mandel looked discreetly at Mrs. March for permission to laugh at this, but at the same moment both ladies became preoccupied with a second rustling on the stairs.

Two tall, well-dressed young girls came in, and Mrs. Mandel introduced, "Miss Dryfoos, Mrs. March; and Miss Mela Dryfoos, Mr. March," she added, and the girls shook hands in their several ways with the Marches.

Miss Dryfoos had keen black eyes, and her hair was intensely black. Her face, but for the slight inward curve of the nose, was regular, and the smallness of her nose and of her mouth did not weaken her face, but gave it a curious effect of fierceness, of challenge. She had a large black fan in her hand, which she waved in talking, with a slow, watchful nervousness. Her sister was blonde, and had a profile like her brother's; but her chin was not so salient, and the weak look of the mouth was not corrected by the spirituality or the fervour of his eyes, though hers were of the same mottled blue. She dropped into the low seat beside Mrs. Mandel, and intertwined her fingers with those of the hand which Mrs. Mandel let her have. She smiled upon the Marches, while Miss Dryfoos watched them intensely, with her eyes first on one and then on the other, as if she did not mean to let any expression of theirs escape her.

"My mother will be down in a minute," she said to Mrs. March.

"I hope we're not disturbing her. It is so good

of you to let us come in the evening," Mrs. March replied.

"Oh, not at all," said the girl. "We receive in the evening."

"When we *do* receive," Miss Mela put in. "We don't always get the chance to." She began a laugh, which she checked at a smile from Mrs. Mandel, which no one could have seen to be reproving.

Miss Dryfoos looked down at her fan, and looked up defiantly at Mrs. March. "I suppose you have hardly got settled. We were afraid we would disturb you when we called."

"Oh no! We were very sorry to miss your visit. We are quite settled in our new quarters. Of course, it's all very different from Boston."

"I hope it's more of a sociable place there," Miss Mela broke in again. "I never saw such an unsociable place as New York. We've been in this house three months, and I don't believe that if we stayed three years any of the neighbours would call."

"I fancy proximity doesn't count for much in New York," March suggested.

Mrs. Mandel said: "That's what I tell Miss Mela. But she is a very social nature, and can't reconcile herself to the fact."

"No, I can't," the girl pouted. "I think it was twice as much fun in Moffitt. I wish I was there now."

"Yes," said March, "I think there's a great deal more enjoyment in those smaller places. There's not so much going on in the way of public amuse-

ments, and so people make more of one another. There are not so many concerts, theatres, operas——”

“Oh, they’ve got a spendid opera-house in Moffitt. It’s just grand,” said Miss Mela.

“Have you been to the opera here, this winter?” Mrs. March asked of the elder girl.

She was glaring with a frown at her sister, and detached her eyes from her with an effort. “What did you say?” she demanded, with an absent bluntness. “Oh yes. Yes! We went once. Father took a box at the Metropolitan.”

“Then you got a good dose of Wagner, I suppose?” said March.

“What?” asked the girl.

“I don’t think Miss Dryfoos is very fond of Wagner’s music,” Mrs. Mandel said. “I believe you are all great Wagnerites in Boston?”

“I’m a very bad Bostonian, Mrs. Mandel. I suspect myself of preferring Verdi,” March answered.

Miss Dryfoos looked down at her fan again, and said, “I like *Trovatore* the best.”

“It’s an opera I never get tired of,” said March, and Mrs. March and Mrs. Mandel exchanged a smile of compassion for his simplicity. He detected it, and added, “But I dare say I shall come down with the Wagner fever in time. I’ve been exposed to some malignant cases of it.”

“That night we were there,” said Miss Mela, “they had to turn the gas down all through one part of it, and the papers said the ladies were awful mad because they couldn’t show their diamonds. I

don't wonder, if they all had to pay as much for their boxes as we did. We had to pay sixty dollars." She looked at the Marches for their sensation at this expense.

March said : " Well, I think I shall take my box by the month, then. It must come cheaper, wholesale."

" Oh no, it don't," said the girl, glad to inform him. " The people that own their boxes, and that had to give fifteen or twenty thousand dollars apiece for them, have to pay sixty dollars a night whenever there's a performance, whether they go or not."

" Then I should go every night," March said.

" Most of the ladies were low neck——"

March interposed, " Well, I shouldn't go low *neck*."

The girl broke into a fondly approving laugh at his drolling. " Oh, I guess you love to train ! Us girls wanted to go low neck, too ; but father said we shouldn't, and mother said if we did she wouldn't come to the front of the box once. Well, she didn't, anyway. We might just as well 'a' gone low neck. She stayed back the whole time, and when they had that dance—the ballet, you know—she just shut her eyes. Well, Conrad didn't like that part much, either ; but us girls and Mrs. Mandel, we brazened it out right in the front of the box. We were about the only ones there that went high neck. Conrad had to wear a swallow-tail ; but father hadn't any, and he had to patch out with a white cravat. You couldn't see what he had on in the back o' the box, anyway."

Mrs. March looked at Miss Dryfoos, who was waving her fan more and more slowly up and down, and who, when she felt herself looked at, returned Mrs. March's smile, which she meant to be ingratiating and perhaps sympathetic, with a flash that made her start, and then ran her fierce eyes over March's face. "Here comes mother," she said, with a sort of breathlessness, as if speaking her thought aloud, and through the open door the Marches could see the old lady on the stairs.

She paused half-way down, and turning, called up: "Coonrod! Coonrod! You bring my shawl down with you."

Her daughter Mela called out to her, "Now, mother, Christine'll give it to you for not sending Mike."

"Well, I don't know where he is, Mely, child," the mother answered back. "He ain't never around when he's wanted, and when he ain't, it seems like a body couldn't git shet of him, nohow."

"Well, you ought to ring for him," cried Miss Mela, enjoying the joke.

Her mother came in with a slow step; her head shook slightly as she looked about the room, perhaps from nervousness, perhaps from a touch of palsy. In either case the fact had a pathos which Mrs. March confessed in the affection with which she took her hard, dry, large, old hand when she was introduced to her, and in the sincerity which she put into the hope that she was well.

"I'm just middlin'," Mrs. Dryfoos replied. "I

ain't never so well, nowadays. I tell fawther I don't believe it agrees with me very well here; but he says I'll git used to it. He's away now, out at Moffitt," she said to March, and wavered on foot a moment before she sank into a chair. She was a tall woman, who had been a beautiful girl, and her grey hair had a memory of bloneness in it like Lindau's, March noticed. She wore a simple silk gown, of a Quakerly grey, and she held a handkerchief folded square, as it had come from the laundress. Something like the Sabbath quiet of a little wooden meeting-house in thick Western woods expressed itself to him from her presence.

"Laws, mother!" said Miss Mela; "what you got that old thing on for? If I'd 'a' known you'd 'a' come down in *that*!"

"Coonrod said it was all right, Mely," said her mother.

Miss Mela explained to the Marches: "Mother was raised among the Dunkards, and she thinks it's wicked to wear anything but a grey silk even for dress up."

"You hain't never heared o' the Dunkards, I reckon," the old woman said to Mrs. March. "Some folks calls 'em the Beardy Men, because they don't never shave; and they wash feet like they do in the Testament. My uncle was one. He raised me."

"I guess pretty much everybody's a Beardy Man nowadays, if he *ain't* a Dunkard!"

Miss Mela looked round for applause of her sally,

but March was saying to his wife : " It's a Pennsylvania German sect, I believe—something like the Quakers. I used to see them when I was a boy."

" Aren't they something like the Mennists?" asked Mrs. Mandel.

" They're good people," said the old woman, " and the world 'd be a heap better off if there was more like 'em."

Her son came in and laid a soft shawl over her shoulders before he shook hands with the visitors. " I am glad you found your way here," he said to them.

Christine, who had been bending forward over her fan, now lifted herself up with a sigh and leaned back in her chair.

" I'm sorry my father isn't here," said the young man to Mrs. March. " He's never met you yet?"

" No; and I should like to see him. We hear a great deal about your father, you know, from Mr. Fulkerson."

" Oh, I hope you don't believe everything Mr. Fulkerson says about people," Mela cried. " He's the greatest person for carrying on when he gets going I ever saw. It makes Christine just as mad when him and mother get to talking about religion; she says she knows he don't care anything more about it than the man in the moon. I reckon he don't try it on much with father."

" Your fawther ain't ever been a perfessor," her mother interposed; " but he's always been a good church-goin' man."

"Not since we come to New York," retorted the girl.

"He's been all broke up since he come to New York," said the old woman, with an aggrieved look.

Mrs. Mandel attempted a diversion. "Have you heard any of our great New York preachers yet, Mrs. March?"

"No, I haven't," Mrs. March admitted; and she tried to imply by her candid tone that she intended to begin hearing them the very next Sunday.

"There are a great many things here," said Conrad, "to take your thoughts off the preaching that you hear in most of the churches. I think the city itself is preaching the best sermon all the time."

"I don't know that I understand you," said March.

Mela answered for him. "Oh, Conrad has got a lot of notions that nobody can understand. You ought to see the church he goes to when he does go. I'd about as lief go to a Catholic church myself; I don't see a bit o' difference. He's the greatest crony with one of their preachers; he dresses just like a priest, and he says he *is* a priest." She laughed for enjoyment of the fact, and her brother cast down his eyes.

Mrs. March, in her turn, tried to take from it the personal tone which the talk was always assuming. "Have you been to the fall exhibition?" she asked Christine; and the girl drew herself up out of the abstraction she seemed sunk in.

"The exhibition?" She looked at Mrs. Mandel.

"The pictures of the Academy, you know," Mrs.

Mandel explained. "Where I wanted you to go the day you had your dress tried on."

"No; we haven't been yet. Is it good?" She had turned to Mrs. March again.

"I believe the fall exhibitions are never so good as the spring ones. But there are some good pictures."

"I don't believe I care much about pictures," said Christine. "I don't understand them."

"Ah, *that's* no excuse for not caring about them," said March lightly. "The painters themselves don't, half the time."

The girl looked at him with that glance at once defiant and appealing, insolent and anxious, which he had noticed before, especially when she stole it toward himself and his wife during her sister's babble. In the light of Fulkerson's history of the family, its origin and its ambition, he interpreted it to mean a sense of her sister's folly and an ignorant will to override his opinion of anything incongruous in themselves and their surroundings. He said to himself that she was deathly proud—too proud to try to palliate anything, but capable of anything that would put others under her feet. Her eyes seemed hopelessly to question his wife's social quality, and he fancied, with not unkindly interest, the inexperienced girl's doubt whether to treat them with much or little respect. He lost himself in fancies about her and her ideals, necessarily sordid, of her possibilities of suffering, of the triumphs and disappointments before her. Her sister would

accept both with a lightness that would keep no trace of either; but in her they would sink lastingly deep. He came out of his reverie to find Mrs. Dryfoos saying to him in her hoarse voice—

“I think it’s a shame, some of the pictur’s a body sees in the winders. They say there’s a law against them things; and if there is, I don’t understand why the police don’t take up them that paints ’em. I hear tell, since I been here, that there’s women that goes to have pictur’s took from them that way by men painters.” The point seemed aimed at March, as if he were personally responsible for the scandal, and it fell with a silencing effect for the moment. Nobody seemed willing to take it up, and Mrs. Dryfoos went on, with an old woman’s severity: “I say they ought to be all tarred and feathered and rode on a rail. They’d be drummed out of town in Moffitt.”

Miss Mela said, with a crowing laugh: “I should think they would! And they wouldn’t anybody go low neck to the opera-house there, either—not low neck the way they do here, anyway.”

“And that pack of worthless hussies,” her mother resumed, “that come out on the stage, and begun to kick——”

“Laws, mother!” the girl shouted, “I thought you said you had your eyes shut!”

All but these two simpler creatures were abashed at the indecorum of suggesting in words the common-places of the theatre and of art.

“Well, I did, Mely, as soon as I could *believe* my

eyes. I don't know what they're doin' in all their churches, to let such things go on," said the old woman. "It's a sin and a shame, *I* think. Don't you, Coonrod?"

A ring at the door cut short whatever answer he was about to deliver.

"If it's going to be company, Coonrod," said his mother, making an effort to rise, "I reckon I better go upstairs."

"It's Mr. Fulkerson, I guess," said Conrad. "He thought he might come;" and at the mention of this light spirit Mrs. Dryfoos sank contentedly back in her chair, and a relaxation of their painful tension seemed to pass through the whole company. Conrad went to the door himself (the serving-man tentatively appeared some minutes later) and let in Fulkerson's cheerful voice before his cheerful person.

"Ah, how d'ye do, Conrad? Brought our friend, Mr. Beaton, with me," those within heard him say; and then, after a sound of putting off overcoats, they saw him fill the doorway, with his feet set square and his arms akimbo.

## IX.

"AH! hello! hello!" Fulkerson said, in recognition of the Marches. "Regular gathering of the clans. How are you, Mrs. Dryfoos? How do you do, Mrs. Mandel, Miss Christine, Mela, Aunt Hitty, and all the folks? How you wuz?" He shook hands gaily all round, and took a chair next the old lady, whose hand he kept in his own, and left Conrad to introduce Beaton. But he would not let the shadow of Beaton's solemnity fall upon the company. He began to joke with Mrs. Dryfoos, and to match rheumatisms with her, and he included all the ladies in the range of appropriate pleasantries. "I've brought Mr. Beaton along to-night, and I want you to make him feel at home, like you do me, Mrs. Dryfoos. He hasn't got any rheumatism to speak of; but his parents live in Syracuse, and he's a kind of an orphan, and we've just adopted him down at the office. When you going to bring the young ladies down there, Mrs. Mandel, for a champagne lunch? I will have some hydro-Mela, and Christine it, heigh? How's that for a little starter? We dropped in at your place a moment, Mrs. March, and gave the young folks a few pointers about their

studies. My goodness! it does me good to see a boy like that of yours; business, from the word go; and your girl just scoops *my* youthful affections. She's a beauty, and I guess she's good too. Well, well, what a world it is! Miss Christine, won't you show Mr. Beaton that seal ring of yours? He knows about such things, and I brought him here to see it as much as anything. It's an intaglio I brought from the other side," he explained to Mrs. March, "and I guess you'll like to look at it. Tried to *give* it to the Dryfoos family, and when I couldn't, I sold it to 'em. Bound to see it on Miss Christine's hand somehow! Hold on! Let him see it where it belongs, first!"

He arrested the girl in the motion she made to take off the ring, and let her have the pleasure of showing her hand to the company with the ring on it. Then he left her to hear the painter's words about it, which he continued to deliver dissyllabically as he stood with her under a gas jet, twisting his elastic figure and bending his head over the ring.

"Well, Mely, child," Fulkerson went on, with an open travesty of her mother's habitual address, "and how are *you* getting along? Mrs. Mandel hold you up to the proprieties pretty strictly? Well, that's right. You know you'd be roaming all over the pasture if she didn't."

The girl gurgled out her pleasure in his funning, and everybody took him on his own ground of privileged character. He brought them all together in their friendliness for himself, and before the

evening was over he had inspired Mrs. Mandel to have them served with coffee, and had made both the girls feel that they had figured brilliantly in society, and that two young men had been devoted to them.

"Oh, I think he's just as lovely as he can live!" said Mela, as she stood a moment with her sister on the scene of her triumph, where the others had left them after the departure of their guests.

"Who?" asked Christine deeply. As she glanced down at her ring, her eyes burned with a softened fire. She had allowed Beaton to change it himself from the finger where she had worn it to the finger on which he said she ought to wear it. She did not know whether it was right to let him, but she was glad she had done it.

"Who? Mr. Fulkerson, goosie-poosie! Not that old stuck-up Mr. Beaton of yours!"

"He *is* proud," assented Christine, with a throb of exultation.

Beaton and Fulkerson went to the elevated station with the Marches; but the painter said he was going to walk home, and Fulkerson let him go alone.

"One way is enough for me," he explained. "When I walk up, I don't walk down. By-by, my son!" He began talking about Beaton to the Marches as they climbed the station stairs together. "That fellow puzzles me. I don't know anybody that I have such a desire to kick, and at the same time that I want to flatter up so much. Affect you that way?" he asked of March.

"Well, as far as the kicking goes, yes."

"And how is it with you, Mrs. March?"

"Oh, I want to flatter him up."

"No; really? Why?—Hold on! I've got the change."

Fulkerson pushed March away from the ticket-office window, and made them his guests, with the inexorable American hospitality, for the ride downtown. "Three!" he said to the ticket-seller; and when he had walked them before him out on the platform and dropped his tickets into the urn, he persisted in his inquiry, "Why?"

"Why, because you always want to flatter conceited people, don't you?" Mrs. March answered, with a laugh.

"Do you? Yes, I guess you do. You think Beaton is conceited?"

"Well, *slightly*, Mr. Fulkerson."

"I guess you're partly right," said Fulkerson, with a sigh, so unaccountable in its connection that they all laughed.

"An ideal 'busted'?" March suggested.

"No, not that, exactly," said Fulkerson. "But I had a notion may be Beaton wasn't conceited all the time."

"Oh!" Mrs. March exulted, "nobody could be so conceited all the time as Mr. Beaton is most of the time. He must have moments of the direst modesty, when he'd be quite flattery-proof."

"Yes, that's what I mean. I guess that's what makes me want to kick him. He's left compliments on my hands that no decent man would."

"Oh! that's tragical," said March.

"Mr. Fulkerson," Mrs. March began, with change of subject in her voice, "who is Mrs. Mandel?"

"Who? What do you think of her?" he rejoined. "I'll tell you about her when we get in the cars. *Look* at that thing! Ain't it beautiful?"

They leaned over the track, and looked up at the next station, where the train, just starting, throbbled out the flame-shot steam into the white moonlight.

"The most beautiful thing in New York—the one always and certainly beautiful thing here," said March; and his wife sighed, "Yes, yes." She clung to him, and remained rapt by the sight till the train drew near, and then pulled him back in a panic.

"Well, there ain't really much to tell about her," Fulkerson resumed, when they were seated in the car. "She's an invention of mine."

"Of yours?" cried Mrs. March.

"Of course!" exclaimed her husband.

"Yes—at least in her present capacity. She sent me a story for the syndicate, back in July some time, along about the time I first met old Dryfoos here. It was a little too long for my purpose, and I thought I could explain better how I wanted it cut in a call than I could in a letter. She gave a Brooklyn address, and I went to see her. I found her," said Fulkerson, with a vague defiance, "a perfect lady. She was living with an aunt over there; and she had seen better days, when she was

a girl, and worse ones afterward. I don't mean to say her husband was a bad fellow; I guess he was pretty good; he was her music-teacher; she met him in Germany, and they got married there, and got through her property before they came over here. Well, she didn't strike me like a person that could make much headway in literature. Her story was well enough, but it hadn't much sand in it; kind of—well, academic, you know. I told her so, and she understood, and cried a little; but she did the best she could with the thing, and I took it and syndicated it. She kind of stuck in my mind, and the first time I went to see the Dryfooses—they were stopping at a sort of family hotel then till they could find a house——” Fulkerson broke off altogether, and said, “I don't know as I know just how the Dryfooses struck you, Mrs. March?”

“Can't you imagine?” she answered, with a kindly smile.

“Yes; but I don't believe I could guess how they would have struck you last summer when I first saw them. My! oh my! *there* was the native earth for you. Mely is a pretty wild colt now, but you ought to have seen her before she was broken to harness. And Christine? Ever see that black leopard they got up there in the Central Park? That was Christine. Well, I saw what they wanted. They all saw it—nobody is a fool in all directions, and the Dryfooses are in their right senses a good deal of the time. Well, to cut a long story short, I got Mrs. Mandel to take 'em in hand—the old lady

as well as the girls. She was a born lady, and always lived like one till she saw Mandel; and that something academic that killed her for a writer was just the very thing for them. She knows the world well enough to know just how much polish they can take on, and she don't try to put on a bit more. See?"

"Yes, I can see," said Mrs. March.

"Well, she took hold at once, as ready as a hospital-trained nurse; and there ain't anything readier on *this* planet. She runs the whole concern, socially and economically, takes all the care of house-keeping off the old lady's hands, and goes round with the girls. By-the-by, I'm going to take my meals at your widow's, March, and Conrad's going to have his lunch there. I'm sick of browsing about."

"Mr. March's *widow*?" said his wife, looking at him with provisional severity.

"I *have* no widow, Isabel," he said, "and never expect to have, till I leave you in the enjoyment of my life insurance. I suppose Fulkerson means the lady with the daughter, who wanted to take us to board."

"Oh yes. How are they getting on, I do wonder?" Mrs. March asked of Fulkerson.

"Well, they've got one family to board; but it's a small one. I guess they'll pull through. They didn't want to take any day boarders at first, the widow said; I guess they have had to come to it."

"Poor things!" sighed Mrs. March. "I hope they'll go back to the country."

“Well, I don’t know. When you’ve once tasted New York—— You wouldn’t go back to Boston, would you?”

“Instantly.”

Fulkerson laughed out a tolerant incredulity.

## X.

BEATON lit his pipe when he found himself in his room, and sat down before the dull fire in his grate to think. It struck him there was a dull fire in his heart a great deal like it, and he worked out a fanciful analogy with the coals, still alive, and the ashes creeping over them, and the dead clay and cinders. He felt sick of himself, sick of his life and of all his works. He was angry with Fulkerson for having got him into that art department of his, for having bought him up; and he was bitter at fate because he had been obliged to use the money to pay some pressing debts, and had not been able to return the check his father had sent him. He pitied his poor old father; he ached with compassion for him; and he set his teeth and snarled with contempt through them for his own baseness. This was the kind of world it was; but he washed his hands of it. The fault was in human nature, and he reflected with pride that he had at least not invented human nature; he had not sunk so low as that yet. The notion amused him; he thought he might get a Satanic epigram out of it some way. But in the meantime that girl, that wild animal,

she kept visibly, tangibly before him ; if he put out his hand he might touch hers, he might pass his arm round her waist. In Paris, in a set he knew there, what an effect she would be with that look of hers, and that beauty, all out of drawing ! They would recognise the flame quality in her. He imagined a joke about her being a fiery spirit, or nymph, naiad, whatever, from one of her native gas wells. He began to sketch on a bit of paper from the table at his elbow vague lines that veiled and revealed a level, dismal landscape, and a vast flame against an empty sky, and a shape out of the flame that took on a likeness, and floated detached from it. The sketch ran up the left side of the sheet and stretched across it. Beaton laughed out. Pretty good to let Fulkerson have that for the cover of his first number ! In black and red it would be effective ; it would catch the eye from the news stands. He made a motion to throw it on the fire, but held it back, and slid it into the table drawer, and smoked on. He saw the dummy with the other sketch in the open drawer, which he had brought away from Fulkerson's in the morning and slipped in there, and he took it out and looked at it. He made some criticisms in line with his pencil on it, correcting the drawing here and there, and then he respected it a little more, though he still smiled at the feminine quality—a young lady quality.

In spite of his experience the night he called upon the Leightons, Beaton could not believe that Alma no longer cared for him. She played at having

forgotten him admirably, but he knew that a few months before she had been very mindful of him. He knew he had neglected them since they came to New York, where he had led them to expect interest, if not attention; but he was used to neglecting people, and he was somewhat less used to being punished for it—punished and forgiven. He felt that Alma had punished him so thoroughly that she ought to have been satisfied with her work and to have forgiven him in her heart afterward. He bore no resentment after the first tingling moments were past; he rather admired her for it; and he would have been ready to go back half an hour later, and accept pardon, and be on the footing of last summer again. Even now he debated with himself whether it was too late to call; but decidedly a quarter to ten seemed late. The next day he determined never to call upon the Leightons again; but he had no reason for this; it merely came into a transitory scheme of conduct, of retirement from the society of women altogether; and after dinner he went round to see them.

He asked for the ladies, and they all three received him, Alma not without a surprise that intimated itself to him, and her mother with no appreciable relenting; Miss Woodburn, with the needlework which she found easier to be voluble over than a book, expressed in her welcome a neutrality both cordial to Beaton and loyal to Alma.

“Is it snowing out-do’s?” she asked briskly, after the greetings were transacted. “Mah goodness!”

she said, in answer to his apparent surprise at the question. "Ah mahight as well have stayed in the Soath, for all the winter Ah have seen in New York yet."

"We don't often have snow much before New-Year's," said Beaton.

"Miss Woodburn is wild for a real Northern winter," Mrs. Leighton explained.

"The othah naght Ah woke up and looked oat of the window and saw all the roofs covered with snow, and it turned oat to be nothing but moonlaght. I was never so disappointed in mah lahfe," said Miss Woodburn.

"If you'll come to St. Barnaby next summer, you shall have all the winter you want," said Alma.

"I can't let you slander St. Barnaby in that way," said Beaton, with the air of wishing to be understood as meaning more than he said.

"Yes?" returned Alma coolly. "I didn't know you were so fond of the climate."

"I never think of it as a climate. It's a landscape. It doesn't matter whether it's hot or cold."

"With the thermometer twenty below, you'd find that it mattered," Alma persisted.

"You don't mean it goes doan to that in the summah?" Miss Woodburn interposed.

"Well, not before the Fourth of the July after," Alma admitted.

"Is that the way you feel about St. Barnaby too, Mrs. Leighton?" Beaton asked, with affected desolation.

"I shall be glad enough to go back in the summer," Mrs. Leighton conceded.

"And I should be glad to go now," said Beaton, looking at Alma. He had the dummy of *Every Other Week* in his hand, and he saw Alma's eyes wandering toward it whenever he glanced at her. "I should be glad to go anywhere to get out of a job I've undertaken," he continued, to Mrs. Leighton. "They're going to start some sort of a new illustrated magazine, and they've got me in for their art department. I'm not fit for it; I'd like to run away. Don't you want to advise me a little, Mrs. Leighton? You know how much I value your taste, and I'd like to have you look at the design for the cover of the first number: they're going to have a different one for every number. I don't know whether you'll agree with me, but I think this is rather nice."

He faced the dummy round, and then laid it on the table before Mrs. Leighton, pushing some of her work aside to make room for it, and standing over her while she bent forward to look at it.

Alma kept her place, away from the table.

"Mah goodness! Ho' exciting!" said Miss Woodburn. "May anybody look?"

"Everybody," said Beaton.

"Well, isn't it perfectly chawming!" Miss Woodburn exclaimed. "Come and look at this, Miss Leighton," she called to Alma, who reluctantly approached.

"What lines are these?" Mrs. Leighton asked, pointing to Beaton's pencil scratches.

"They're suggestions of modification," he replied.

"I don't think they improve it much. What do you think, Alma?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the girl, constraining her voice to an effect of indifference, and glancing carelessly down at the sketch. "The design might be improved; but I don't think those suggestions would do it."

"They're mine," said Beaton, fixing his eyes upon her with a beautiful sad dreaminess that he knew he could put into them; he spoke with a dreamy remoteness of tone: his wind-harp stop, Wetmore called it.

"I supposed so," said Alma calmly.

"Oh, mah goodness!" cried Miss Woodburn. "Is that the way you awtusts talk to each othah? Well, Ah'm glad Ah'm not an awtust—unless I could do all the talking."

"Artists cannot tell a fib," Alma said, "or even act one," and she laughed in Beaton's upturned face.

He did not unbend his dreamy gaze. "You're quite right. The suggestions are stupid."

Alma turned to Miss Woodburn: "You hear? Even when we speak of our own work."

"Ah nevah hoad anything lahke it!"

"And the design itself?" Beaton persisted.

"Oh, I'm not an art editor," Alma answered, with a laugh of exultant evasion.

A tall, dark, grave-looking man of fifty, with a swarthy face, and iron-grey moustache and imperial and goatee, entered the room. Beaton knew the type; he had been through Virginia sketching for one of the illustrated papers, and he had seen such men in Richmond. Miss Woodburn hardly needed to say, "May Ah introduce you to mah fathaw, Co'nel Woodburn, Mr. Beaton?"

The men shook hands, and Colonel Woodburn said, in that soft, gentle, slow Southern voice without our Northern contractions: "I am very glad to meet you, sir; happy to make yo' acquaintance. Do not move, madam," he said to Mrs. Leighton, who made a deprecatory motion to let him pass to the chair beyond her; "I can find my way." He bowed a bulk that did not lend itself readily to the devotion, and picked up the ball of yarn she had let drop out of her lap in half rising. "Yo' worsteds, madam."

"Yarn, yarn, Colonel Woodburn!" Alma shouted. "You're quite incorrigible. A spade is a spade!"

"But sometimes it is a trump, my dear young lady," said the Colonel, with unabated gallantry; "and when yo' mothah uses yarn, it is worsteds. But I respect worsteds even under the name of yarn: our ladies—my own mothah and sistahs—had to knit the socks we wore—all we could get—in the woe."

"Yes, and aftah the woe," his daughter put in. "The knitting has not stopped yet in some places. Have you been much in the Soath, Mr. Beaton?"

Beaton explained just how much.

"Well, sir," said the Colonel, "then you have seen a country making gigantic struggles to retrieve its losses, sir. The south is advancing with enormous strides, sir."

"Too fast for some of us to keep up," said Miss Woodburn, in an audible aside. "The pace in Charlottesboag is pofectly killing, and we had to drop oat into a slow place like New York."

"The progress in the South is material now," said the Colonel; "and those of us whose interests are in another direction find ourselves—isolated—isolated, sir. The intellectual centres are still in the No'th, sir; the great cities draw the mental activity of the country to them, sir. Necessarily New York is the metropolis."

"Oh, everything comes here," said Beaton, impatient of the elder's ponderosity. Another sort of man would have sympathised with the Southerner's willingness to talk of himself, and led him on to speak of his plans and ideals. But the sort of man that Beaton was could not do this; he put up the dummy into the wrapper he had let drop on the floor beside him, and tied it round with string while Colonel Woodburn was talking. He got to his feet with the words he spoke, and offered Mrs. Leighton his hand.

"Must you go?" she asked, in surprise.

"I am on my way to a reception," he said. She had noticed that he was in evening dress; and now she felt the vague hurt that people invited nowhere

feel in the presence of those who are going somewhere. She did not feel it for herself, but for her daughter; and she knew Alma would not have let her feel it if she could have prevented it. But Alma had left the room for a moment, and she tacitly indulged this sense of injury in her behalf.

"Please say good night to Miss Leighton for me," Beaton continued. He bowed to Miss Woodburn, "Good night, Miss Woodburn," and to her father bluntly, "Good night."

"Good night, sir," said the Colonel, with a sort of severe suavity.

"Oh, isn't he chawming!" Miss Woodburn whispered to Mrs. Leighton when Beaton left the room.

Alma spoke to him in the hall without. "You knew that was my design Mr. Beaton. Why did you bring it?"

"Why?" He looked at her in gloomy hesitation. Then he said: "You know why. I wished to talk it over with you, to serve you, please you, get back your good opinion. But I've done neither the one nor the other; I've made a mess of the whole thing."

Alma interrupted him. "Has it been accepted?"

"It will be accepted, if you will let it."

"Let it?" she laughed. "I shall be delighted." She saw him swayed a little toward her. "It's a matter of business, isn't it?"

"Purely. Good night."

When Alma returned to the room, Colonel Woodburn was saying to Mrs. Leighton: "I do not contend

that it is impossible, madam, but it is very difficult in a thoroughly commercialised society, like yours, to have the feelings of a gentleman. How can a business man, whose prosperity, whose earthly salvation, necessarily lies in the adversity of some one else, be delicate and chivalrous, or even honest? If we could have had time to perfect our system at the South, to eliminate what was evil and develop what was good in it, we should have had a perfect system. But the virus of commercialism was in us too; it forbade us to make the best of a divine institution, and tempted us to make the worst. Now the curse is on the whole country; the dollar is the measure of every value, the stamp of every success. What does not sell is a failure; and what sells succeeds."

"The hobby is oat, mah deah," said Miss Woodburn, in an audible aside to Alma.

"Were you speaking of me, Colonel Woodburn?" Alma asked.

"Surely not, my dear young lady."

"But he's been saying that awtusts are just as greedy aboat money as anybody," said his daughter.

"The law of commercialism is on everything in a commercial society," the Colonel explained, softening the tone in which his convictions were presented. "The final reward of art is money, and not the pleasure of creating."

"Perhaps they would be willing to take it all oat in that, if othah people would let them pay their bills in the pleasure of creating," his daughter teased.

"They are helpless, like all the rest," said her

father, with the same deference to her as to other women. "I do not blame them."

"Oh, mah goodness! Didn't you say, sir, that Mr. Beaton had bad manners?"

Alma relieved a confusion which he seemed to feel in reference to her. "Bad manners? He has no manners! That is, when he's himself. He has pretty good ones when he's somebody else."

Miss Woodburn began, "Oh, mah——" and then stopped herself. Alma's mother looked at her with distressful question, but the girl seemed perfectly cool and contented; and she gave her mind provisionally to a point suggested by Colonel Woodburn's talk.

"Still, I can't believe it was right to hold people in slavery, to whip them and sell them. It never did seem right to me," she added, in apology for her extreme sentiments to the gentleness of her adversary.

"I quite agree with you, madam," said the Colonel. "Those were the abuses of the institution. But if we had not been vitiated on the one hand and threatened on the other by the spirit of commercialism from the North—and from Europe too—those abuses could have been eliminated, and the institution developed in the direction of the mild patriarchalism of the divine intention." The Colonel hitched his chair, which figured a hobby careering upon its hind legs, a little toward Mrs. Leighton, and the girls approached their heads, and began to whisper; they fell deferentially silent when the

Colonel paused in his argument, and went on again when he went on.

At last they heard Mrs. Leighton saying, "And have you heard from the publishers about your book yet?"

Then Miss Woodburn cut in, before her father could answer: "The coase of commercialism is on that too. They are trahing to fahnd oat whethah it will pay."

"And they are right—quite right," said the Colonel. "There is no longer any other criterion; and even a work that attacks the system must be submitted to the tests of the system."

"The system won't accept destruction on any othah tomes," said Miss Woodburn demurely.

## XI.

AT the reception, where two men in livery stood aside to let him pass up the outside steps of the house, and two more helped him off with his overcoat indoors, and a fifth miscalled his name into the drawing-room, the Syracuse stone-cutter's son met the niece of Mrs. Horn, and began at once to tell her about his evening at the Dryfooses'. He was in very good spirits, for so far as he could have been elated or depressed by his parting with Alma Leighton he had been elated; she had not treated his impudence with the contempt that he felt it deserved; she must still be fond of him; and the warm sense of this, by operation of an obscure but well-recognised law of the masculine being, disposed him to be rather fond of Miss Vance. She was a slender girl, whose semi-æsthetic dress flowed about her with an accentuation of her long forms, and redeemed them from censure by the very frankness with which it confessed them; nobody could have said that Margaret Vance was too tall. Her pretty little head, which she had an effect of choosing to have little in the same spirit of judicious defiance, had a good deal of reading in it; she was proud to

know literary and artistic fashions as well as society fashions. She liked being singled out by an exterior distinction so obvious as Beaton's, and she listened with sympathetic interest to his account of those people. He gave their natural history reality by drawing upon his own; he reconstructed their plebeian past from the experiences of his childhood and his youth of the pre-Parisian period; and he had a pang of suicidal joy in insulting their ignorance of the world.

"What different kinds of people you meet!" said the girl at last, with an envious sigh. Her reading had enlarged the bounds of her imagination, if not her knowledge; the novels nowadays dealt so much with very common people, and made them seem so very much more worth while than the people one met.

She said something like this to Beaton. He answered: "You can meet the people I'm talking of very easily, if you want to take the trouble. It's what they came to New York for. I fancy it's the great ambition of their lives to be met."

"Oh yes," said Miss Vance fashionably, and looked down; then she looked up and said intellectually: "Don't you think it's a great pity? How much better for them to have stayed where they were and what they were!"

"Then you could never have had any chance of meeting them," said Beaton. "I don't suppose you intend to go out to the gas country?"

"No," said Miss Vance, amused. "Not that I shouldn't like to go."

"What a daring spirit! You ought to be on the staff of *Every Other Week*," said Beaton.

"The staff—*Every Other Week*? What is it?"

"The missing link; the long-felt want of a tie between the Arts and the Dollars." Beaton gave her a very picturesque, a very dramatic sketch of the theory, the purpose, and the *personnel* of the new enterprise.

Miss Vance understood too little about business of any kind to know how it differed from other enterprises of its sort. She thought it was delightful; she thought Beaton must be glad to be part of it, though he had represented himself so bored, so injured, by Fulkerson's insisting upon having him. "And is it a secret? Is it a thing not to be spoken of?"

"*Tutt' altro!* Fulkerson will be enraptured to have it spoken of in society. He would pay any reasonable bill for the advertisement."

"What a delightful creature! Tell him it shall all be spent in charity."

"He would like that. He would get two paragraphs out of the fact, and your name would go into the 'Literary Notes' of all the Newspapers."

"Oh, but I shouldn't want my *name* used!" cried the girl, half horrified into fancying the situation real.

"Then you'd better not say anything about *Every Other Week*. Fulkerson is preternaturally unscrupulous."

March began to think so too, at times. He was

perpetually suggesting changes in the make-up of the first number, with a view to its greater vividness of effect. One day he came in and said: "This thing isn't going to have any sort of get up and howl about it, unless you have a paper in the first number going for Bevans's novels. Better get Maxwell to do it."

"Why, I thought you liked Bevans's novels?"

"So I do; but where the good of *Every Other Week* is concerned I am a Roman father. The popular gag is to abuse Bevans, and Maxwell is the man to do it. There hasn't been a new magazine started for the last three years that hasn't had an article from Maxwell in its first number cutting Bevans all to pieces. If people don't see it, they'll think *Every Other Week* is some old thing."

March did not know whether Fulkerson was joking or not. He suggested, "Perhaps they'll think it's an old thing if they do see it."

"Well, get somebody else, then; or else get Maxwell to write under an assumed name. Or—I forgot! He'll be anonymous under our system anyway. Now there ain't a more popular racket for us to work in that first number than a good, swingeing attack on Bevans. People read his books and quarrel over 'em, and the critics are all against him, and a regular flaying, with salt and vinegar rubbed in afterward, will tell more with people who like good old-fashioned fiction than anything else. I like Bevans's things, but, dad burn it! when it comes to that first number, I'd offer up anybody."

"What an immoral little wretch you are, Fulkerson!" said March, with a laugh.

Fulkerson appeared not to be very strenuous about the attack on the novelist. "Say!" he called out gaily, "what should you think of a paper defending the late lamented system of slavery?"

"What *do* you mean, Fulkerson?" asked March, with a puzzled smile.

Fulkerson braced his knees against his desk, and pushed himself back, but kept his balance to the eye by canting his hat sharply forward. "There's an old cock over there at the widow's that's written a book to prove that slavery was and is the only solution of the labour problem. He's a Southerner."

"I should imagine," March assented.

"He's got it on the brain that if the South could have been let alone by the commercial spirit and the pseudo-philanthropy of the North, it would have worked out slavery into a perfectly ideal condition for the labourer, in which he would have been insured against want, and protected in all his personal rights by the state. He read the introduction to me last night. I didn't catch on to all the points—his daughter's an awfully pretty girl, and I was carrying that fact in my mind all the time too, you know—but that's about the gist of it."

"Seems to regard it as a lost opportunity?" said March.

"Exactly! What a mighty catchy title, heigh? Look well on the title-page."

"Well written?"

"I reckon so ; I don't know. The Colonel read it mighty eloquently."

"It mightn't be such bad business," said March, in a muse. "Could you get me a sight of it without committing yourself?"

"If the Colonel hasn't sent it off to another publisher this morning. He just got it back with thanks yesterday. He likes to keep it travelling."

"Well, try it. I've a notion it might be a curious thing."

"Look here, March," said Fulkerson, with the effect of taking a fresh hold ; "*I wish* you could let me have one of those New York things of yours for the first number. After all, that's going to be the great card."

"I couldn't, Fulkerson ; I couldn't, really. I want to philosophise the material, and I'm too new to it all yet. I don't want to do merely superficial sketches."

"Of course ! Of course ! I understand that. Well, I don't want to hurry you. Seen that old fellow of yours yet ? I think we ought to have that translation in the first number ; don't you ? We want to give 'em a notion of what we're going to do in that line."

"Yes," said March ; "and I was going out to look up Lindau this morning. I've inquired at Maroni's, and he hasn't been there for several days. I've some idea perhaps he's sick. But they gave me his address, and I'm going to see."

"Well, that's right. We want the first number to be the key-note in every way."

March shook his head. "You can't make it so. The first number is bound to be a failure always, as far as the representative character goes. It's invariably the case. Look at the first numbers of all the things you've seen started. They're experimental, almost amateurish, and necessarily so, not only because the men that are making them up are comparatively inexperienced like ourselves, but because the material sent them to deal with is more or less consciously tentative. People send their adventurous things to a new periodical because the whole thing is an adventure. I've noticed that quality in all the volunteer contributions; it's in the articles that have been done to order even. No; I've about made up my mind that if we can get one good striking paper into the first number that will take people's minds off the others, we shall be doing all we can possibly hope for. I should like," March added, less seriously, "to make up three numbers ahead, and publish the third one first."

Fulkerson dropped forward and struck his fist on the desk. "It's a first-rate idea. Why not *do* it?"

March laughed. "Fulkerson, I don't believe there's any quackish thing you wouldn't do in this cause. From time to time I'm thoroughly ashamed of being connected with such a charlatan."

Fulkerson struck his hat sharply backward. "Ah, dad burn it! To give that thing the right kind of start I'd walk up and down Broadway between two

boards, with the title-page of *Every Other Week* facsimiled on one and my name and address on the——” He jumped to his feet and shouted, “March, I’ll do it!”

“*What?*”

“I’ll hire a lot of fellows to make mud-turtles of themselves, and I’ll have a lot of big facsimiles of the title-page, and I’ll paint the town red!”

March looked aghast at him. “Oh, come, now, Fulkerson!”

“I mean it. I was in London when a new man had taken hold of the old *Cornhill*, and they were trying to boom it, and they had a procession of these mud-turtles that reached from Charing Cross to Temple Bar. ‘*Cornhill Magazine*. Sixpence. Not a dull page in it.’ I said to myself then that it was the liveliest thing I ever saw. I respected the man that did that thing from the bottom of my heart. I wonder I ever forgot it. But it shows what a shaky thing the human mind is at its best.”

“You infamous mountebank!” said March, with great amusement at Fulkerson’s access; “you call that congeries of advertising instincts of yours the human mind at its best? Come, don’t be so diffident, Fulkerson. Well, I’m off to find Lindau, and when I come back I hope Mr. Dryfoos will have you under control. I don’t suppose you’ll be quite sane again till after the first number is out. Perhaps public opinion will sober you then.”

“Confound it, March! How do you think they *will* take it? I swear I’m getting so nervous I don’t

know half the time which end of me is up. I believe if we don't get that thing out by the first of February it'll be the death of me."

"Couldn't wait till Washington's Birthday? I was thinking it would give the day a kind of distinction, and strike the public imagination, if——"

"No, I'll be dogged if I could!" Fulkerson lapsed more and more into the parlance of his early life in this season of strong excitement. "I believe if Beaton lags any on the art-leg I'll kill him."

"Well, *I* shouldn't mind your killing Beaton," said March tranquilly, as he went out.

He went over to Third Avenue and took the Elevated down to Chatham Square. He found the variety of people in the car as unfailingly entertaining as ever. He rather preferred the east side to the west side lines, because they offered more nationalities, conditions, and characters to his inspection. They draw not only from the uptown American region, but from all the vast hive of populations swarming between them and the East River. He had found that, according to the hour, American husbands going to and from business, and American wives going to and from shopping, prevailed on the Sixth Avenue road, and that the most picturesque admixture to these familiar aspects of human nature were the brilliant eyes and complexions of the American Hebrews, who otherwise contributed to the effect of well-clad comfort and citizen-self-satisfaction of the crowd. Now and then he had found himself in a car mostly filled with Neapolitans from the constructions

far up the line, where he had read how they are worked and fed and housed like beasts ; and listening to the jargon of their unintelligible dialect, he had occasion for pensive question within himself as to what notion these poor animals formed of a free republic from their experience of life under its conditions ; and whether they found them practically very different from those of the immemorial brigandage and enforced complicity with rapine under which they had been born. But, after all, this was an infrequent effect, however massive, of travel on the west side, whereas the east offered him continual entertainment in like sort. The sort was never quite so squalid. For short distances the lowest poverty, the hardest pressed labour, must walk ; but March never entered a car without encountering some interesting shape of shabby adversity, which was almost always adversity of foreign birth. New York is still popularly supposed to be in the control of the Irish, but March noticed in these east side travels of his what must strike every observer returning to the city after a prolonged absence : the numerical subordination of the dominant race. If they do not out-vote them, the people of Germanic, of Slavonic, of Pelasgic, of Mongolian stock outnumber the prepotent Celts ; and March seldom found his speculation centred upon one of these. The small eyes, the high cheeks, the broad noses, the puff lips, the bare, cue-filleted skulls, of Russians, Poles, Czechs, Chinese ; the furtive glitter of Italians ; the blonde dulness of Germans ; the cold quiet of

Scandinavians—fire under ice—were aspects that he identified, and that gave him abundant suggestion for the personal histories he constructed, and for the more public-spirited reveries in which he dealt with the future economy of our heterogeneous commonwealth. It must be owned that he did not take much trouble about this ; what these poor people were thinking, hoping, fearing, enjoying, suffering ; just where and how they lived ; who and what they individually were—these were the matters of his waking dreams as he stared hard at them, while the train raced further into the gay ugliness—the shapeless, graceless, reckless picturesqueness of the Bowery.

There were certain signs, certain façades, certain audacities of the prevailing hideousness that always amused him in that uproar to the eye which the strident forms and colours made. He was interested in the insolence with which the railway had drawn its erasing line across the Corinthian front of an old theatre, almost grazing its fluted pillars, and flouting its dishonoured pediment. The colossal effigies of the fat women and the tuft-headed Circassian girls of cheap museums ; the vistas of shabby cross streets ; the survival of an old hip-roofed house here and there at their angles ; the Swiss *châlet*, histrionic decorative-ness of the stations in prospect or retrospect ; the vagaries of the lines that narrowed together or stretched apart according to the width of the avenue, but always in wanton disregard of the life that dwelt, and bought and sold, and rejoiced or sorrowed, and clattered or crawled, around, below,

above—were features of the frantic panorama that perpetually touched his sense of humour and moved his sympathy. Accident and then exigency seemed the forces at work to this extraordinary effect ; the play of energies as free and planless as those that force the forest from the soil to the sky ; and then the fierce struggle for survival, with the stronger life persisting over the deformity, the mutilation, the destruction, the decay of the weaker. The whole at moments seemed to him lawless, godless ; the absence of intelligent, comprehensive purpose in the huge disorder, and the violent struggle to subordinate the result to the greater good, penetrated with its dumb appeal the consciousness of a man who had always been too self-enwrapped to perceive the chaos to which the individual selfishness must always lead.

But there was still nothing definite, nothing better than a vague discomfort, however poignant, in his half recognition of such facts ; and he descended the station stairs at Chatham Square, with a sense of the neglected opportunities of painters in that locality. He said to himself that if one of those fellows were to see in Naples that turmoil of cars, trucks, and teams of every sort, intershot with foot-passengers going and coming to and from the crowded pavements, under the web of the railroad tracks overhead, and amidst the spectacular approach of the streets that open into the square, he would have it down in his sketch-book at once. He decided simultaneously that his own local studies must be

illustrated, and that he must come with the artist and show him just which bits to do, not knowing that the two arts can never approach the same material from the same point. He thought he would particularly like his illustrator to render the Dickensy, cockneyish quality of the shabby-genteel ballad-seller of whom he stopped to ask his way to the street where Lindau lived, and whom he instantly perceived to be, with his stock in trade, the sufficient object of an entire study by himself. He had his ballads strung singly upon a cord against the house wall, and held down in piles on the pavement with stones and blocks of wood. Their control in this way intimated a volatility which was not perceptible in their sentiment. They were mostly tragical or doleful: some of them dealt with the wrongs of the working-man; others appealed to a gay experience of the high seas; but vastly the greater part to memories and associations of an Irish origin; some still uttered the poetry of plantation life in the artless accents of the end-man. Where they trusted themselves, with syntax that yielded promptly to any exigency of rhythmic art, to the ordinary American speech, it was to strike directly for the affections, to celebrate the domestic ties, and, above all, to embalm the memories of angel and martyr mothers, whose dissipated sons deplored their sufferings too late. March thought this not at all a bad thing in them; he smiled in patronage of their simple pathos; he paid the tribute of a laugh when the poet turned, as he some-

times did, from his conception of angel and martyr motherhood, and portrayed the mother in her more familiar phases of virtue and duty, with the retributive shingle or slipper in her hand. He bought a pocketful of this literature, popular in a sense which the most successful book can never be, and enlisted the ballad vendor so deeply in the effort to direct him to Lindau's dwelling by the best way that he neglected another customer, till a sarcasm on his absent-mindedness stung him to retort, "I'm a-trying to answer a gentleman a civil question; that's where the absent-minded comes in."

It seemed for some reason to be a day of leisure with the Chinese dwellers in Mott Street, which March had been advised to take first. They stood about the tops of basement stairs, and walked two and two along the dirty pavement, with their little hands tucked into their sleeves across their breasts, aloof in immaculate cleanliness from the filth around them, and scrutinising the scene with that cynical sneer of faint surprise to which all aspects of our civilisation seem to move their superiority. Their numbers gave character to the street, and rendered not them, but what was foreign to them, strange there; so that March had a sense of missionary quality in the old Catholic church, built long before their incursion was dreamt of. It seemed to have come to them there, and he fancied in the statued saint that looked down from its façade something not so much tolerant as tolerated, something propitiatory, almost deprecative. It was a fancy, of

course ; the street was sufficiently peopled with Christian children, at any rate, swarming and shrieking at their games ; and presently a Christian mother appeared, pushed along by two policemen on a handcart, with a gelatinous tremor over the paving and a gelatinous jouncing at the curb-stones. She lay with her face to the sky, sending up an inarticulate lamentation ; but the indifference of the officers forbade the notion of tragedy in her case. She was perhaps a local celebrity ; the children left off their games, and ran gaily trooping after her ; even the young fellow and young girl exchanging playful blows in a robust flirtation at the corner of a liquor store suspended their scuffle with a pleased interest as she passed. March understood the unwillingness of the poor to leave the worst conditions in the city for comfort and plenty in the country when he reflected upon this dramatic incident, one of many no doubt which daily occur to entertain them in such streets. A small town could rarely offer anything comparable to it, and the country never. He said that if life appeared so hopeless to him as it must to the dwellers in that neighbourhood he should not himself be willing to quit its distractions, its alleviations, for the vague promise of unknown good in the distance somewhere.

But what charm could such a man as Lindau find in such a place ? It could not be that he lived there because he was too poor to live elsewhere : with a shutting of the heart, March refused to believe this as he looked round on the abounding evidences

of misery, and guiltily remembered his neglect of his old friend. Lindau could probably find as cheap a lodging in some decenter part of the town; and in fact there was some amelioration of the prevailing squalor in the quieter street which he turned into from Mott.

A woman with a tied-up face of toothache opened the door for him when he pulled, with a shiver of foreboding, the bell knob, from which a yard of rusty crape dangled. But it was not Lindau who was dead, for the woman said he was at home, and sent March stumbling up the four or five dark flights of stairs that led to his tenement. It was quite at the top of the house, and when March obeyed the German-English "Komm!" that followed his knock, he found himself in a kitchen where a meagre breakfast was scattered in stale fragments on the table before the stove. The place was bare and cold; a half-empty beer bottle scarcely gave it a convivial air. On the left from this kitchen was a room with a bed in it, which seemed also to be a cobbler's shop: on the right, through a door that stood ajar, came the German-English voice again, saying this time, "Hier!"

## XII.

MARCH pushed the door open into a room like that on the left, but with a writing-desk instead of a cobbler's bench, and a bed, where Lindau sat propped up, with a coat over his shoulders and a skull-cap on his head, reading a book, from which he lifted his eyes to stare blankly over his spectacles at March. His hairy old breast showed through the night-shirt, which gaped apart; the stump of his left arm lay upon the book to keep it open.

"Ah, my tear yo'ng friendt! Passil! Marge! Iss it you?" he called out joyously, the next moment.

"Why, are you sick, Lindau?" March anxiously scanned his face in taking his hand.

Lindau laughed. "No; I'm all righdt. Only a lidtle lazy, and a lidtle eggonomigal. Idt's jeaper to stay in pedt sometimes as to geep a fire a-goin' all the time. Don't wandt to gome too hardt on the *brafer Mann*, you know:

"Braver Mann, er schafft mir zu essen."

You remember? Heine? You readt Heine still? Who is your favourite boet now, Passil? You write

some boetry yourself yet ? No ? Well, I am gladt to zee you. Brush those baperss off of that jair. Well, idt is goodt for zore eyess. How didt you findt where I lif ? ”

“ They told me at Maroni’s,” said March. He tried to keep his eyes on Lindau’s face, and not see the discomfort of the room, but he was aware of the shabby and frowsy bedding, the odour of stale smoke, and the pipes and tobacco shreds mixed with the books and manuscripts strewn over the leaf of the writing-desk. He laid down on the mass the pile of foreign magazines he had brought under his arm. “ They gave me another address first.”

“ Yes. I have chust gome here,” said Lindau. “ Idt is not very cay, heigh ? ”

“ It might be gayer,” March admitted, with a smile. “ Still,” he added soberly, “ a good many people seem to live in this part of the town. Apparently they die here too, Lindau. There is crape on your outside door. I didn’t know but it was for you.”

“ Nodt this time,” said Lindau, in the same humour. “ Berhaps some other time. We geep the ondertakers bretty pusy down here.”

“ Well,” said March, “ undertakers must live, even if the rest of us have to die to let them.” Lindau laughed, and March went on : “ But I’m glad it isn’t your funeral, Lindau. And you say you’re not sick, and so I don’t see why we shouldn’t come to business.”

“ Pusiness ? ” Lindau lifted his eyebrows. “ You gome on pusiness ? ”

"And pleasure combined," said March, and he went on to explain the service he desired at Lindau's hands.

The old man listened with serious attention, and with assenting nods that culminated in a spoken expression of his willingness to undertake the translations. March waited with a sort of mechanical expectation of his gratitude for the work put in his way, but nothing of the kind came from Lindau, and March was left to say, "Well, everything is understood, then; and I don't know that I need add that if you ever want any little advance on the work——"

"I will ask you," said Lindau quietly, "and I thank you for that. But I can wait; I ton't needt any money just at bresent." As if he saw some appeal for greater frankness in March's eye, he went on: "I tidn't come here begause I was too boor to lif anywhere else, and I ton't stay in pedt begause I couldn't haf a fire to geep warm if I wanted it. I'm noddt zo padt off as Marmontel when he went to Paris. I'm a lidtle loaxurious, that is all. If I stay in pedt it's zo I can fling money away on some-things else. Heigh?"

"But what *are* you living here for, Lindau?" March smiled at the irony lurking in Lindau's words.

"Well, you zee, I foundt I was begoming a lidtle too moech of an aristocrat. I hadt a room oap in Greenvidge Willage, among dose pig pugs over on the west side, and I foundt"—Lindau's voice lost

its jesting quality, and his face darkened—"that I was beginning to forget the boor!"

"I should have thought," said March, with impartial interest, "that you might have seen poverty enough, now and then, in Greenwich Village to remind you of its existence."

"Nodt like here," said Lindau. "Andt you must zee it all the dtime—zee it, hear it, smell it, dtaste it—or you forget it. That is what I gome here for. I was begoming a ploated aristograt. I thought I was nodt like these beople down here, when I gome down once to look aroundt; I thought I must be somethings else, and zo I zaid I better take myself in time, and I gome here among my brothers—the beccars and the thieves!" A noise made itself heard in the next room, as if the door were furtively opened, and a faint sound of tiptoeing and of hands clawing on a table. "Thiefs!" Lindau repeated, with a shout. "Lidtle thieves, that gabture your breakfast. Ah! ha! ha!" A wild scurrying of feet, joyous cries and tittering, and a slamming door followed upon his explosion, and he resumed in the silence: "Idt is the children cot pack from school. They gome and steal what I leaf there on my daple. Idt's one of our lidtle chokes; we onderstand each other; that's all righdt. Once the goppler in the other room there he used to chase 'em; he couldn't onderstand their lidtle tricks. Now dot goppler's teadt, and he ton't chase 'em any more. He was a Bohemian. Gindt of grazy, I cuess."

"Well, it's a sociable existence," March suggested.

"But perhaps if you let them have the things without stealing——"

"Oh no, no! Most noddt mage them too gonceitedt. They mostn't go and feel themselves petter than those boor millionairss that hadt to steal their money."

March smiled indulgently at his old friend's violence. "Oh, there are fagots and fagots, you know, Lindau; perhaps not all the millionaires are so guilty."

"Let us speak German," cried Lindau, in his own tongue, pushing his book aside, and thrusting his skull-cap back from his forehead. "How much money can a man honestly earn without wronging or oppressing some other man?"

"Well, if you'll let me answer in English," said March, "I should say about five thousand dollars a year. I name that figure because it's my experience that I never could earn more; but the experience of other men may be different, and if they tell me they can earn ten, or twenty, or fifty thousand a year, I'm not prepared to say they can't do it."

Lindau hardly waited for his answer. "Not the most gifted man that ever lived, in the praetice of any art or science, and paid at the highest rate that exceptional genius could justly demand from those who have worked for their money, could ever earn a million dollars. It is the landlords and the merchant princees, the railroad kings and the coal barons (the oppressors to whom you instinctively give the titles of tyrants)—it is these that *make* the millions, but no

man *earns* them. What artist, what physician, what scientist, what poet was ever a millionaire?"

"I can only think of the poet Rogers," said March, amused by Lindau's tirade. "But he was as exceptional as the other Rogers, the martyr, who died with warm feet." Lindau had apparently not understood his joke, and he went on, with the American ease of mind about everything: "But you must allow, Lindau, that some of those fellows don't do so badly with their guilty gains. Some of them give work to armies of poor people——"

Lindau furiously interrupted. "Yes, when they have gathered their millions together from the hunger and cold and nakedness and ruin and despair of hundreds of thousands of other men, they 'give work' to the poor! They *give* work! They allow their helpless brothers to earn enough to keep life in them! They give *work*! Who is it gives *toil*, and where will your rich men be when once the poor shall refuse to give toil? Why, you have come to give *me* work!"

March laughed outright. "Well, I'm not a millionaire, anyway, Lindau, and I hope you won't make an example of me by refusing to give toil. I dare say the millionaires deserve it, but I'd rather they wouldn't suffer in my person."

"No," returned the old man, mildly relaxing the fierce glare he had bent upon March. "No man deserves to suffer at the hands of another. I lose myself when I think of the injustice in the world. But I must not forget that I am like the worst of them."

"You might go up Fifth Avenue and live among the rich awhile, when you're in danger of that," suggested March. "At any rate," he added, by an impulse which he knew he could not justify to his wife, "I wish you'd come some day and lunch with their emissary. I've been telling Mrs. March about you, and I want her and the children to see you. Come over with these things and report." He put his hand on the magazines as he rose.

"I will come," said Lindau gently.

"Shall I give you your book?" asked March.

"No; I giddt oap bretty soon."

"And—and—can you dress yourself?"

"I vhistle, and one of those liddle fellowss comess. We haf to dake gare of one another in a blace like this. Idt iss nodt like the worldt," said Lindau gloomily.

March thought he ought to cheer him up. "Oh, it isn't such a bad world, Lindau! After all, the average of millionaires is small in it." He added, "And I don't believe there's an American living that could look at that arm of yours and not wish to lend you a hand for the one you gave us all." March felt this to be a fine turn, and his voice trembled slightly in saying it.

Lindau smiled grimly. "You think zo? I wouldn't moch like to drost 'em. I've driedt idt too often." He began to speak German again fiercely: "Besides, they owe me nothing. Do you think I knowingly gave my hand to save this oligarchy of traders and tricksters, this aristocracy

of railroad wreckers and stock gamblers and mine-slave drivers and mill-serf owners? No; I gave it to the slave; the slave—ha! ha! ha!—whom I helped to unshackle to the common liberty of hunger and cold. And you think I would be the beneficiary of such a state of things?”

“I’m sorry to hear you talk so, Lindau,” said March; “very sorry.” He stopped with a look of pain, and rose to go. Lindau suddenly broke into a laugh and into English.

“Oh, well, it is only dalk, Passil, and it toes me goodt. My parg is worse than my pidte, I cuess. I pring these things roundt bretty soon. Good-bye, Passil, my tear poy. *Auf wiedersehen!*”

### XIII.

MARCH went away thinking of what Lindau had said, but not for the impersonal significance of his words so much as for the light they cast upon Lindau himself. He thought the words violent enough, but in connection with what he remembered of the cheery, poetic, hopeful idealist, they were even more curious than lamentable. In his own life of comfortable reverie he had never heard any one talk so before, but he had read something of the kind now and then in blatant labour newspapers which he had accidentally fallen in with, and once at a strikers' meeting he had heard rich people denounced with the same frenzy. He had made his own reflections upon the tastelessness of the rhetoric, and the obvious buncombe of the motive, and he had not taken the matter seriously.

He could not doubt Lindau's sincerity, and he wondered how he came to that way of thinking. From his experience of himself he accounted for a prevailing literary quality in it; he decided it to be from Lindau's reading and feeling rather than his reflection. That was the notion he formed of some

things he had met with in Ruskin to much the same effect; he regarded them with amusement as the chimeras of a rhetorician run away with by his phrases.

But as to Lindau, the chief thing in his mind was a conception of the droll irony of a situation in which so fervid a hater of millionaires should be working, indirectly at least, for the prosperity of a man like Dryfoos, who, as March understood, had got his money together out of every gambler's chance in speculation, and all a schemer's thrift from the error and need of others. The situation was not more incongruous, however, than all the rest of the *Every Other Week* affair. It seemed to him that there were no crazy fortuities that had not tended to its existence, and as time went on, and the day drew near for the issue of the first number, the sense of this intensified till the whole lost at moments the quality of a waking fact, and came to be rather a fantastic fiction of sleep.

Yet the heterogeneous forces did co-operate to a reality which March could not deny, at least in their presence, and the first number was representative of all their nebulous intentions in a tangible form. As a result, it was so respectable that March began to respect these intentions, began to respect himself for combining and embodying them in the volume which appealed to him with a novel fascination, when the first advance copy was laid upon his desk. Every detail of it was tiresomely familiar already, but the whole had a

fresh interest now. He now saw how extremely fit and effective Miss Leighton's decorative design for the cover was, printed in black and brick-red on the delicate grey tone of the paper. It was at once attractive and refined, and he credited Beaton with quite all he merited in working it over to the actual shape. The touch and the taste of the art editor were present throughout the number. As Fulkerson said, Beaton had caught on with the delicacy of a humming-bird and the tenacity of a bull-dog to the virtues of their illustrative process, and had worked it for all it was worth. There were seven papers in the number, and a poem on the last page of the cover, and he had found some graphic comment for each. It was a larger proportion than would afterward be allowed, but for once in a way it was allowed. Fulkerson said they could not expect to get their money back on that first number anyway. Seven of the illustrations were Beaton's; two or three he got from practised hands; the rest were the work of unknown people which he had suggested, and then related and adapted with unfailing ingenuity to the different papers. He handled the illustrations with such sympathy as not to destroy their individual quality, and that indefinable charm which comes from good amateur work in whatever art. He rescued them from their weaknesses and errors, while he left in them the evidence of the pleasure with which a clever young man, or a sensitive girl, or a refined woman had done them. Inevitably from his manipulation,

however, the art of the number acquired homogeneity, and there was nothing casual in its appearance. The result, March eagerly owned, was better than the literary result, and he foresaw that the number would be sold and praised chiefly for its pictures. Yet he was not ashamed of the literature, and he indulged his admiration of it the more freely because he had not only not written it, but in a way had not edited it. To be sure, he had chosen all the material, but he had not voluntarily put it all together for that number; it had largely put itself together, as every number of every magazine does, and as it seems more and more to do, in the experience of every editor. There had to be, of course, a story, and then a sketch of travel. There was a literary essay and a social essay; there was a dramatic trifle, very gay, very light; there was a dashing criticism on the new pictures, the new plays, the new books, the new fashions; and then there was the translation of a bit of vivid Russian realism, which the editor owed to Lindau's exploration of the foreign periodicals left with him; Lindau was himself a romanticist of the Victor Hugo sort, but he said this fragment of Dostoyevski was good of its kind. The poem was a bit of society verse, with a backward look into simpler and wholesomer experiences.

Fulkerson was extremely proud of the number; but he said it was too good—too good from every point of view. The cover was too good, and the paper was too good, and that device of rough edges,

which got over the objection to uncut leaves while it secured their æsthetic effect, was a thing that he trembled for, though he rejoiced in it as a stroke of the highest genius. It had come from Beaton at the last moment, as a compromise, when the problem of the vulgar croppiness of cut leaves and the unpopularity of uncut leaves seemed to have no solution but suicide. Fulkerson was still morally crawling round on his hands and knees, as he said, in abject gratitude at Beaton's feet, though he had his qualms, his questions; and he declared that Beaton was the most inspired ass since Balaam's. "We're all asses, of course," he admitted, in semi-apology to March; "but we're no such asses as Beaton." He said that if the tasteful decorativeness of the thing did not kill it with the public outright, its literary excellence would give it the finishing stroke. Perhaps that might be overlooked in the impression of novelty which a first number would give, but it must never happen again. He implored March to promise that it should never happen again; he said their only hope was in the immediate cheapening of the whole affair. It was bad enough to give the public too much quantity for their money, but to throw in such quality as that was simply ruinous; it must be stopped. These were the expressions of his intimate moods; every front that he presented to the public wore a glow of lofty, of devout exultation. His pride in the number gushed out in fresh bursts of rhetoric to every one whom he could get to talk with him about it. He

worked the personal kindliness of the press to the utmost. He did not mind making himself ridiculous or becoming a joke in the good cause, as he called it. He joined in the applause when a humorist at the club feigned to drop dead from his chair at Fulkerson's introduction of the topic, and he went on talking that first number into the surviving spectators. He stood treat upon all occasions, and he lunched attachés of the press at all hours. He especially befriended the correspondents of the newspapers of other cities, for, as he explained to March, those fellows could give him any amount of advertising simply as literary gossip. Many of the fellows were ladies who could not be so summarily asked out to lunch, but Fulkerson's ingenuity was equal to every exigency, and he contrived somehow to make each of these feel that she had been possessed of exclusive information. There was a moment when March conjectured a willingness in Fulkerson to work Mrs. March into the advertising department, by means of a tea to these ladies and their friends which she should administer in his apartment, but he did not encourage Fulkerson to be explicit, and the moment passed. Afterward, when he told his wife about it, he was astonished to find that she would not have minded doing it for Fulkerson, and he experienced another proof of the bluntness of the feminine instincts in some directions, and of the personal favour which Fulkerson seemed to enjoy with the whole sex. This alone was enough to account for the willingness of these

correspondents to write about the first number, but March accused him of sending it to their addresses with boxes of Jacqueminot roses and Huyler candy.

Fulkerson let him enjoy his joke. He said that he would do that or anything else for the good cause, short of marrying the whole circle of female correspondents.

March was inclined to hope that if the first number had been made too good for the country at large, the more enlightened taste of metropolitan journalism would invite a compensating favour for it in New York. But first Fulkerson and then the event proved him wrong. In spite of the quality of the magazine, and in spite of the kindness which so many newspaper men felt for Fulkerson, the notices in the New York papers seemed grudging and provisional to the ardour of the editor. A merit in the work was acknowledged, and certain defects in it for which March had trembled were ignored; but the critics astonished him by selecting for censure points which he was either proud of or had never noticed; which being now brought to his notice he still could not feel were faults. He owned to Fulkerson that if they had said so and so against it, he could have agreed with them, but that to say thus and so was preposterous; and that if the advertising had not been adjusted with such generous recognition of the claims of the different papers, he should have known the counting-room was at the bottom of it. As it was, he could only attribute it to perversity or stupidity. It was

certainly stupid to condemn a magazine novelty like *Every Other Week* for being novel; and to augur that if it failed, it would fail through its departure from the lines on which all the other prosperous magazines had been built, was in the last degree perverse, and it looked malicious. The fact that it was neither exactly a book nor a magazine ought to be for it and not against it, since it would invade no other field; it would prosper on no ground but its own.

#### XIV.

THE more March thought of the injustice of the New York press (which had not, however, attacked the literary quality of the number) the more bitterly he resented it; and his wife's indignation superheated his own. *Every Other Week* had become a very personal affair with the whole family; the children shared their parents' disgust; Bella was outspoken in her denunciations of a venal press. Mrs. March saw nothing but ruin ahead, and began tacitly to plan a retreat to Boston, and an establishment retrenched to the basis of two thousand a year. She shed some secret tears in anticipation of the privations which this must involve; but when Fulkerson came to see March rather late the night of the publication day, she nobly told him that if the worst came to the worst she could only have the kindest feeling toward him, and should not regard him as in the slightest degree responsible.

"Oh, hold on, hold on!" he protested. "You don't think we've made a failure, do you?"

"Why, of course," she faltered, while March remained gloomily silent.

"Well, I guess we'll wait for the official count,  
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first. Even New York hasn't gone against us, and I guess there's a majority coming down to Harlem River that could sweep everything before it, anyway."

"What do you mean, Fulkerson?" March demanded sternly.

"Oh, nothing! Only, the News Company has *ordered* ten thousand now; and you know we had to give them the first twenty on commission."

"What *do* you mean?" March repeated; his wife held her breath.

"I mean that the first number is a booming success already, and that it's going to a hundred thousand before it stops. That unanimity and variety of censure in the morning papers, combined with the attractiveness of the thing itself, has cleared every stand in the city, and now if the favour of the country press doesn't turn the tide against us, our fortune's made." The Marches remained dumb. "Why, look here! Didn't I tell you those criticisms would be the making of us, when they first began to turn you blue this morning, March?"

"He came home to lunch perfectly sick," said Mrs. March; "and I wouldn't let him go back again."

"Didn't I *tell* you so?" Fulkerson persisted.

March could not remember that he had, or that he had been anything but incoherently and hysterically jocose over the papers, but he said, "Yes, yes—I think so."

"I knew it from the start," said Fulkerson. "The only other person who took those criticisms in the right spirit was Mother Dryfoos—I've just been

bolstering up the Dryfoos family. She had them read to her by Mrs. Mandel, and she understood them to be all the most flattering prophecies of success. Well, I didn't read between the lines to that extent, quite; but I saw that they were going to help us, if there was anything in us, more than anything that could have been done. And there was something in us! I tell you, March, that seven-shooting self-cocking donkey of a Beaton has given us the greatest start! He's caught on like a mice. He's made the thing awfully *chic*; it's jimmy; there's lots of dog about it. He's managed that process so that the illustrations look as expensive as first-class wood-cuts, and they're cheaper than chromos. He's put style into the whole thing."

"Oh yes," said March with eager meekness, "it's Beaton that's done it."

Fulkerson read jealousy of Beaton in Mrs. March's face. "Beaton has given us the start because his work appeals to the eye. There's no denying that the pictures have sold this first number; but I expect the literature of this first number to sell the pictures of the second. I've been reading it all over, nearly, since I found how the cat was jumping; I was anxious about it, and I tell you, old man, it's *good*. Yes, sir! I was afraid may be you had got it *too good*, with that Boston refinement of yours; but I reckon you haven't. I'll risk it. I don't see how you got so much variety into so few things, and all of them palpitant, all of 'em on the keen jump with actuality."

The mixture of American slang with the jargon of European criticism in Fulkerson's talk made March smile, but his wife did not seem to notice it in her exultation. "That is just what I say," she broke in. "It's perfectly wonderful. I never was anxious about it a moment, except, as you say, Mr. Fulkerson, I was afraid it might be too good."

They went on in an antiphony of praise till March said, "Really, I don't see what's left me but to strike for higher wages. I perceive that I'm indispensable."

"Why, old man, you're coming in on the divvy, you know," said Fulkerson.

They both laughed, and when Fulkerson was gone, Mrs. March asked her husband what a divvy was.

"It's a chicken before it's hatched."

"No! Truly?"

He explained, and she began to spend the divvy.

At Mrs. Leighton's Fulkerson gave Alma all the honour of the success; he told her mother that the girl's design for the cover had sold every number, and Mrs. Leighton believed him.

"Well, Ah think *Ah* maght have *some* of the glory," Miss Woodburn pouted. "Where am *Ah* comin' in?"

"You're coming in on the cover of the next number," said Fulkerson. "We're going to have your face there; Miss Leighton's going to sketch it in." He said this reckless of the fact that he had already shown them the design of the second

number which was Beaton's weird bit of gas-country landscape.

"Ah don't see why *you* don't wrahte the fiction for your magazine, Mr. Fulkerson," said the girl.

This served to remind Fulkerson of something. He turned to her father. "I'll tell you what, Colonel Woodburn, I want Mr. March to see some chapters of that book of yours. I've been talking to him about it."

"I do not think it would add to the popularity of your periodical, sir," said the Colonel, with a stately pleasure in being asked. "My views of a civilisation based upon responsible slavery would hardly be acceptable to your commercialised society."

"Well, not as a practical thing, of course," Fulkerson admitted. "But as something retrospective, speculative, I believe it would make a hit. There's so much going on now about social questions; I guess people would like to read it."

"I do not know that my work is intended to amuse people," said the Colonel, with some state.

"Mah goodness! Ah only wish it *was*, then," said his daughter; and she added: "Yes, Mr. Fulkerson, the Colonel will be very glad to submit po'tions of his woak to yo' edito'. We want to have some of the honaw. Perhaps we can say we helped to stop yo' magazine, if we didn't help to stawt it."

They all laughed at her boldness, and Fulkerson said, "It'll take a good deal more than that to stop *Every Other Week*. The Colonel's whole book couldn't do it." Then he looked unhappy, for

Colonel Woodburn did not seem to enjoy his reassuring words ; but Miss Woodburn came to his rescue. "You maght illustrate it with the po'trait of the awthor's daughtaw, if it's too late for the covah."

"Going to have *that* in every number, Miss Woodburn," he cried.

"Oh, mah goodness!" she said, with mock humility.

Alma sat looking at her piquant head, black, unconsciously outlined against the lamp, as she sat working by the table. "Just keep still a moment!"

She got her sketch-block and pencils, and began to draw ; Fulkerson tilted himself forward and looked over her shoulder ; he smiled outwardly ; inwardly he was divided between admiration of Miss Woodburn's arch beauty and appreciation of the skill which reproduced it ; at the same time he was trying to remember whether March had authorised him to go so far as to ask for a sight of Colonel Woodburn's manuscript. He felt that he had trenched upon March's province, and he framed one apology to the editor for bringing him the manuscript, and another to the author for bringing it back

"Most Ah hold raght still like it was a photograph?" asked Miss Woodburn. "Can Ah toak?"

"Talk all you want," said Alma, squinting her eyes. "And you needn't be either adamantine, nor yet—wooden."

"Oh, ho' very good of you! Well, if Ah can toak—go on, Mr. Fulkerson!"

"Me talk? I can't breathe till this thing is done!" sighed Fulkerson; at that point of his mental drama the Colonel was behaving rustily about the return of his manuscript, and he felt that he was looking his last on Miss Woodburn's profile.

"Is she getting it raght?" asked the girl.

"I don't know which is which," said Fulkerson.

"Oh, Ah hope *Ah* shall! I don't want to go round feelin' like a sheet of papah half the time."

"You could rattle on, just the same," suggested Alma.

"Oh, now! Jost listen to that, Mr. Fulkerson. Do you call that any way to toak to people?"

"You might know which you were by the colour," Fulkerson began, and then he broke off from the personal consideration with a business inspiration, and smacked himself on the knee: "We could *print* it in colour!"

Mrs. Leighton gathered up her sewing and held it with both hands in her lap, while she came round, and looked critically at the sketch and the model over her glasses. "It's very good, Alma," she said.

Colonel Woodburn remained restively on his side of the table. "Of course, Mr. Fulkerson, you were jesting, sir, when you spoke of printing a sketch of my daughter."

"Why, I don't know—— If you object——"

"I do, sir—decidedly," said the Colonel.

"Then that settles it, of course," said Fulkerson.

"I only meant——"

"Indeed it doesn't!" cried the girl. "Who's to

know who it's from? Ah'm jost set on havin' it printed! Ah'm going to appear as the head of Slavery—in opposition to the head of Liberty.”

“There'll be a revolution inside of forty-eight hours, and we'll have the Colonel's system going wherever a copy of *Every Other Week* circulates,” said Fulkerson.

“This sketch belongs to me,” Alma interposed. “I'm not going to let it be printed.”

“Oh, mah goodness!” said Miss Woodburn, laughing good-humouredly. “That's becose you were brought up to hate slavery.”

“I should like Mr. Beaton to see it,” said Mrs. Leighton in a sort of absent tone. She added, to Fulkerson: “I rather expected he might be in to-night.”

“Well, if he comes we'll leave it to Beaton,” Fulkerson said, with relief in the solution, and an anxious glance at the Colonel, across the table, to see how he took that form of the joke. Miss Woodburn intercepted his glance and laughed, and Fulkerson laughed too, but rather forlornly.

Alma set her lips primly and turned her head first on one side and then on the other to look at the sketch. “I don't think we'll leave it to Mr. Beaton, even if he comes.”

“We left the other design for the cover to Beaton,” Fulkerson insinuated. “I guess you needn't be afraid of him.”

“Is it a question of my being afraid?” Alma asked; she seemed coolly intent on her drawing.

"Miss Leighton thinks he ought to be afraid of her," Miss Woodburn explained.

"It's a question of *his* courage, then?" said Alma.

"Well, I don't think there are many young ladies that Beaton's afraid of," said Fulkerson, giving himself the respite of this purely random remark, while he interrogated the faces of Mrs. Leighton and Colonel Woodburn for some light upon the tendency of their daughters' words.

He was not helped by Mrs. Leighton's saying, with a certain anxiety, "I don't know what you mean, Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, you're as much in the dark as I am myself, then," said Fulkerson. "I suppose I meant that Beaton is rather—a—favourite, you know. The women like him."

Mrs. Leighton sighed, and Colonel Woodburn rose and left the room.

## XV.

IN the silence that followed, Fulkerson looked from one lady to the other with dismay. "I seem to have put my foot in it, somehow," he suggested, and Miss Woodburn gave a cry of laughter.

"Poo' Mr. Fulkerson! Poo' Mr. Fulkerson! Papa thoat you wanted him to go."

"Wanted him to go?" repeated Fulkerson.

"We always mention Mr. Beaton when we want to get rid of papa."

"Well, it seems to me that I *have* noticed that he didn't take much interest in Beaton, as a general topic. But I don't know that I ever saw it drive him out of the room before!"

"Well, he isn't always so bad," said Miss Woodburn. "But it was a case of hate at first sight, and it seems to be growin' on papa."

"Well, I can understand that," said Fulkerson. "The impulse to destroy Beaton is something that everybody has to struggle against at the start."

"I must say, Mr. Fulkerson," said Mrs. Leighton in the tremor through which she nerved herself to differ openly with any one she liked, "I never had to struggle with anything of the kind, in regard to

Mr. Beaton. He has always been most respectful and—and considerate, with *me*, whatever he has been with others.”

“Well, of course, Mrs. Leighton!” Fulkerson came back in a soothing tone. “But you see you’re the rule that proves the exception. I was speaking of the way *men* felt about Beaton. It’s different with ladies; I just said so.”

“Is it always different?” Alma asked, lifting her head and her hand from her drawing, and staring at it absently.

Fulkerson pushed his hands both through his whiskers. “Look here! Look here!” he said. “Won’t somebody start some other subject? We haven’t had the weather up yet, have we? Or the opera? What is the matter with a few remarks about politics?”

“Why I thoat you lahked to toak about the staff of yo’ magazine,” said Miss Woodburn.

“Oh, I do!” said Fulkerson. “But not always about the same member of it. He gets monotonous, when he doesn’t get complicated. I’ve just come round from the Marches’,” he added, to Mrs. Leighton.

“I suppose they’ve got thoroughly settled in their apartment by this time.” Mrs. Leighton said something like this whenever the Marches were mentioned. At the bottom of her heart she had not forgiven them for not taking her rooms; she had liked their looks so much; and she was always hoping that they were uncomfortable or dissatisfied; she could not help wanting them punished a little.

"Well, yes; as much as they ever will be," Fulkerson answered. "The Boston style is pretty different, you know; and the Marches are old-fashioned folks, and I reckon they never went in much for bric-à-brac. They've put away nine or ten barrels of dragon candlesticks, but they keep finding new ones."

"Their landlady has just joined our class," said Alma. "Isn't her name Green? She happened to see my copy of *Every Other Week*, and said she knew the editor; and told me."

"Well, it's a little world," said Fulkerson. "You seem to be touching elbows with everybody. Just think of your having had our head translator for a model."

"Ah think that your whole publication revolves around the Leighton family," said Miss Woodburn.

"That's pretty much so," Fulkerson admitted. "Anyhow, the publisher seems disposed to do so."

"Are you the publisher? I thought it was Mr. Dryfoos," said Alma.

"It is."

"Oh!"

The tone and the word gave Fulkerson a discomfort which he promptly confessed. "Missed again."

The girls laughed, and he regained something of his lost spirits, and smiled upon their gaiety, which lasted beyond any apparent reason for it.

Miss Woodburn asked, "And is Mr. Dryfoos senio' anything like *ouah* Mr. Dryfoos?"

"Not the least."

"But he's jost as exemplary?"

"Yes; in his way."

"Well, Ah wish Ah could see all those pinks of puffection togethath, once."

"Why, look here! I've been thinking I'd celebrate a little, when the old gentleman gets back. Have a little supper—something of that kind. How would you like to let me have your parlours for it, Mrs. Leighton? You ladies could stand on the stairs, and have a peep at us, in the bunch."

"Oh, mah! What a privilege! And will Miss Alma be there, with the othah contributors? Ah shall jost expah of envy!"

"She won't be there in person," said Fulkerson, "but she'll be represented by the head of the art department."

"Mah goodness! And who'll the head of the publishing department represent?"

"He can represent you," said Alma.

"Well, Ah want to be represented, someho'."

"We'll have the banquet the night before you appear on the cover of our fourth number," said Fulkerson.

"Ah thoat that was doubly-fo'bidden," said Miss Woodburn. "By the stern parent and the envious awtust."

"We'll get Beaton to get round them, somehow. I guess we can trust him to manage that."

Mrs. Leighton sighed her resentment of the implication.

"I always feel that Mr. Beaton doesn't do himself justice," she began.

Fulkerson could not forego the chance of a joke. "Well, may be he would rather temper justice with mercy in a case like his." This made both the younger ladies laugh. "I judge this is my chance to get off with my life," he added, and he rose as he spoke. "Mrs. Leighton, I am about the only man of my sex who doesn't thirst for Beaton's blood most of the time. But I know him and I don't. He's more kinds of a good fellow than people generally understand. He don't wear his heart upon his sleeve—not his ulster sleeve, anyway. You can always count me on your side when it's a question of finding Beaton not guilty if he'll leave the State."

Alma set her drawing against the wall, in rising to say good night to Fulkerson. He bent over on his stick to look at it. "Well, it's beautiful," he sighed, with unconscious sincerity.

Alma made him a courtesy of mock modesty. "Thanks to Miss Woodburn."

"Oh no! All she had to do was simply to stay put."

"Don't you think Ah might have improved it if Ah had looked better?" the girl asked gravely.

"Oh, you *couldn't*!" said Fulkerson, and he went off triumphant in their applause and their cries of "Which? which?"

Mrs. Leighton sank deep into an accusing gloom when at last she found herself alone with her daughter. "I don't know what you are thinking

about, Alma Leighton. If you don't like Mr. Beaton——"

"I don't."

"You don't? You know better than that. You know that you did care for him."

"Oh! that's a very different thing. That's a thing that can be got over."

"Got over!" repeated Mrs. Leighton, aghast.

"Of course, it can! Don't be romantic, mamma. People get over dozens of such fancies. They even marry for love two or three times."

"Never!" cried her mother, doing her best to feel shocked, and at last looking it.

Her looking it had no effect upon Alma. "You can easily get over caring for people; but you can't get over liking them—if you like them because they are sweet and good. That's what lasts. I was a simple goose, and he imposed upon me because he was a sophisticated goose. Now the case is reversed."

"He *does* care for you, now. You can see it. Why do you encourage him to come here?"

"I don't," said Alma. "I will tell him to keep away if you like. But whether he comes or goes, it will be the same."

"Not to him, Alma! He is in love with you!"

"He has never said so."

"And you would really let him say so, when you intend to refuse him?"

"I can't very well refuse him till he *does* say so."

This was undeniable. Mrs. Leighton could only demand in an awful tone, "May I ask *why*—if you

cared for him ; and I know you care for him still—you will refuse him ? ”

Alma laughed. “ Because—because I ’m wedded to my Art, and I ’m not going to commit bigamy, whatever I do.”

“ Alma ! ”

“ Well, then, because I don’t *like* him—that is, I don’t believe in him, and don’t trust him. He ’s fascinating, but he ’s false and he ’s fickle. He can’t help it, I dare say.”

“ And you are perfectly hard. Is it possible that you were actually pleased to have Mr. Fulkerson tease you about Mr. Dryfoos ? ”

“ Oh, good night, now, mamma ! This is becoming personal.”

## PART THIRD.

### I.

THE scheme of a banquet to celebrate the initial success of *Every Other Week* expanded in Fulkerson's fancy into a series. Instead of the publishing and editorial force, with certain of the more representative artists and authors sitting down to a modest supper in Mrs. Leighton's parlours, he conceived of a dinner at Delmonico's, with the principal literary and artistic people throughout the country as guests, and an inexhaustible hospitality to reporters and correspondents, from whom paragraphs, prophetic and historic, would flow weeks before and after the first of the series. He said the thing was a new departure in magazines; it amounted to something in literature as radical as the American Revolution in politics: it was the idea of self-government in the arts; and it was this idea that had never yet been fully developed in regard to it. That was what must be done in the speeches at the dinner, and the speeches must be reported. Then it would go like wildfire. He asked March whether he thought Mr. Depew could be got to come; Mark Twain, he was

sure would come; he was a literary man. They ought to invite Mr. Evarts, and the Cardinal and the leading Protestant divines. His ambition stopped at nothing, nothing but the question of expense; there he had to wait the return of the elder Dryfoos from the West, and Dryfoos was still delayed at Moffitt, and Fulkerson openly confessed that he was afraid he would stay there till his own enthusiasm escaped in other activities, other plans.

Fulkerson was as little likely as possible to fall under a superstitious subjection to another man; but March could not help seeing that in this possible measure Dryfoos was Fulkerson's fetish. He did not revere him, March decided, because it was not in Fulkerson's nature to revere anything; he could like and dislike, but he could not respect. Apparently, however, Dryfoos daunted him somehow; and besides the homage which those who have not pay to those who have, Fulkerson rendered Dryfoos the tribute of a feeling which March could only define as a sort of bewilderment. As well as March could make out, this feeling was evoked by the spectacle of Dryfoos's unfailing luck, which Fulkerson was fond of dazzling himself with. It perfectly consisted with a keen sense of whatever was sordid and selfish in a man on whom his career must have had its inevitable effect. He liked to philosophise the case with March, to recall Dryfoos as he was when he first met him still somewhat in the sap, at Moffitt, and to study the processes by which he imagined him to have dried into the hardened speculator, without even the

pretence to any advantage but his own in his ventures. He was aware of painting the character too vividly, and he warned March not to accept it exactly in those tints, but to subdue them and shade it for himself. He said that where his advantage was not concerned, there was ever so much good in Dryfoos, and that if in some things he had grown inflexible, he had expanded in others to the full measure of the vast scale on which he did business. It had seemed a little odd to March that a man should put money into such an enterprise as *Every Other Week* and go off about other affairs, not only without any sign of anxiety but without any sort of interest. But Fulkerson said that was the splendid side of Dryfoos. He had a courage, a magnanimity, that was equal to the strain of any such uncertainty. He had faced the music once for all, when he asked Fulkerson what the thing would cost in the different degrees of potential failure; and then he had gone off, leaving everything to Fulkerson and the younger Dryfoos, with the instruction simply to go ahead and not bother him about it. Fulkerson called that pretty tall for an old fellow who used to bewail the want of pigs and chickens to occupy his mind. He alleged it as another proof of the versatility of the American mind, and of the grandeur of institutions and opportunities that let every man grow to his full size, so that any man in America could run the concern if necessary. He believed that old Dryfoos could step into Bismarck's shoes, and run the German Empire at ten days' notice, or

about as long as it would take him to go from New York to Berlin. But Bismarck would not know anything about Dryfoos's plans till Dryfoos got ready to show his hand. Fulkerson himself did not pretend to say what the old man had been up to, since he went West. He was at Moffitt first, and then he was at Chicago, and then he had gone out to Denver to look after some mines he had out there, and a railroad or two; and now he was at Moffitt again. He was supposed to be closing up his affairs there, but nobody could say.

Fulkerson told March the morning after Dryfoos returned that he had not only not pulled out at Moffitt, but had gone in deeper, ten times deeper than ever. He was in a royal good-humour, Fulkerson reported, and was going to drop into the office on his way up from the street (March understood Wall Street) that afternoon. He was tickled to death with *Every Other Week* so far as it had gone, and was anxious to pay his respects to the editor.

March accounted for some rhetoric in this, but let it flatter him, and prepared himself for a meeting about which he could see that Fulkerson was only less nervous than he had shown himself about the public reception of the first number. It gave March a disagreeable feeling of being owned and of being about to be inspected by his proprietor; but he fell back upon such independence as he could find in the thought of those two thousand dollars of income beyond the caprice of his owner, and maintained an outward serenity.

He was a little ashamed afterward of the resolution it had cost him to do so. It was not a question of Dryfoos's physical presence: that was rather effective than otherwise, and carried a suggestion of moneyed indifference to convention in the grey business suit of provincial cut, and the low, wide-brimmed hat of flexible black felt. He had a stick with an old-fashioned top of buck-horn worn smooth and bright by the palm of his hand, which had not lost its character in fat, and which had a history of former work in its enlarged knuckles, though it was now as soft as March's, and must once have been small even for a man of Mr. Dryfoos's stature; he was below the average size. But what struck March was the fact that Dryfoos seemed furtively conscious of being a country person, and of being aware that in their meeting he was to be tried by other tests than those which would have availed him as a shrewd speculator. He evidently had some curiosity about March, as the first of his kind whom he had encountered; some such curiosity as the country school trustee feels and tries to hide in the presence of the new schoolmaster. But the whole affair was of course on a higher plane; on one side Dryfoos was much more a man of the world than March was, and he probably divined this at once, and rested himself upon the fact in a measure. It seemed to be his preference that his son should introduce them, for he came upstairs with Conrad, and they had fairly made acquaintance before Fulkerson joined them.

Conrad offered to leave them at once, but his

father made him stay. "I reckon Mr. March and I haven't got anything so private to talk about that we want to keep it from the other partners. Well, Mr. March, are you getting used to New York yet? It takes a little time."

"Oh yes. But not so much time as most places. Everybody belongs more or less in New York; nobody has to belong here altogether."

"Yes, that is so. You can try it, and go away if you don't like it a good deal easier than you could from a smaller place. Wouldn't make so much talk, would it?" He glanced at March with a jocose light in his shrewd eyes. "That is the way I feel about it all the time: just visiting. Now, it wouldn't be that way in Boston, I reckon?"

"You couldn't keep on visiting there your whole life," said March.

Dryfoos laughed, showing his lower teeth in a way that was at once simple and fierce. "Mr. Fulkerson didn't hardly know as he could get you to leave. I suppose you got used to it there. I never been in your city."

"I had got used to it; but it was hardly my city, except by marriage. My wife's a Bostonian."

"She's been a little homesick here, then," said Dryfoos, with a smile of the same quality as his laugh.

"Less than I expected," said March. "Of course she was very much attached to our old home."

"I guess my wife won't ever get used to New York," said Dryfoos, and he drew in his lower lip

with a sharp sigh. "But my girls like it ; they're young. You never been out our way yet, Mr. March ? Out West ?"

"Well, only for the purpose of being born, and brought up. I used to live in Crawfordsville, and then Indianapolis."

"Indianapolis is bound to be a great place," said Dryfoos. "I remember now, Mr. Fulkerson told me you was from our State." He went on to brag of the West, as if March were an Easterner and had to be convinced. "You ought to see all that country. It's a great country."

"Oh yes," said March, "I understand that." He expected the praise of the great West to lead up to some comment on *Every Other Week* ; and there was abundant suggestion of that topic in the manuscripts, proofs of letter-press and illustrations, with advance copies of the latest number strewn over his table.

But Dryfoos apparently kept himself from looking at these things. He rolled his head about on his shoulders to take in the character of the room, and said to his son, "You didn't change the woodwork after all."

"No ; the architect thought we had better let it be, unless we meant to change the whole place. He liked its being old-fashioned."

"I hope you feel comfortable here, Mr. March," the old man said, bringing his eyes to bear upon him again after their tour of inspection.

"Too comfortable for a working-man," said March, and he thought that this remark must bring them to

some talk about his work, but the proprietor only smiled again.

"I guess I shan't lose much on this house," he returned, as if musing aloud. "This down-town property is coming up. Business is getting in on all these side streets. I thought I paid a pretty good price for it, too." He went on to talk of real estate, and March began to feel a certain resentment at his continued avoidance of the only topic in which they could really have a common interest. "You live down this way somewhere, don't you?" the old man concluded.

"Yes. I wished to be near my work." March was vexed with himself for having recurred to it; but afterward he was not sure but Dryfoos shared his own diffidence in the matter, and was waiting for him to bring it openly into the talk. At times he seemed wary and masterful, and then March felt that he was being examined and tested; at others so simple that March might well have fancied that he needed encouragement, and desired it. He talked of his wife and daughters in a way that invited March to say friendly things of his family, which appeared to give the old man first an undue pleasure, and then a final distrust. At moments he turned, with an effect of finding relief in it, to his son and spoke to him across March of matters which he was unacquainted with; he did not seem aware that this was rude, but the young man must have felt it so; he always brought the conversation back, and once at some cost to himself when his father made it personal.

"I want to make a regular New York business man out of that fellow," he said to March, pointing at Conrad with his stick. "You s'pose I'm ever going to do it?"

"Well, I don't know," said March, trying to fall in with the joke. "Do you mean nothing but a business man?"

The old man laughed at whatever latent meaning he fancied in this, and said, "You think he would be a little too much for me there? Well, I've seen enough of 'em to know it don't always take a large pattern of a man to do a large business. But I want him to get the business training, and then if he wants to go into something else, he knows what the world is, anyway. Heigh?"

"Oh yes!" March assented, with some compassion for the young man reddening patiently under his father's comment.

Dryfoos went on as if his son were not in hearing. "Now that boy wanted to be a preacher. What does a preacher know about the world he preaches against, when he's been brought up a preacher? He don't know so much as a bad little boy in his Sunday-school; he knows about as much as a girl. I always told him, You be a man first, and then you be a preacher, if you want to. Heigh?"

"Precisely." March began to feel some compassion for himself in being witness of the young fellow's discomfort under his father's homily.

"When we first come to New York, I told him, Now here's your chance to see the world on a big

scale. You know already what work and saving and steady habits and sense will bring a man to; you don't want to go round among the rich; you want to go among the poor, and see what laziness, and drink, and dishonesty, and foolishness will bring men to. And I guess he knows, about as well as anybody; and if he ever goes to preaching he'll know what he's preaching about." The old man smiled his fierce, simple smile, and in his sharp eyes March fancied contempt of the ambition he had balked in his son. The present scene must have been one of many between them, ending in meek submission on the part of the young man whom his father perhaps without realising his cruelty treated as a child. March took it hard that he should be made to suffer in the presence of a co-ordinate power like himself, and began to dislike the old man out of proportion to his offence, which might have been mere want of taste, or an effect of mere embarrassment before him. But evidently, whatever rebellion his daughters had carried through against him, he had kept his dominion over this gentle spirit unbroken. March did not choose to make any response, but to let him continue, if he would, entirely upon his own impulse.

## II.

A SILENCE followed, of rather painful length. It was broken by the cheery voice of Fulkerson, sent before him to herald Fulkerson's cheery person. "Well, I suppose you've got the glorious success of *Every Other Week* down pretty cold in your talk by this time. I should have been up sooner to join you, but I was nipping a man for the last page of the cover. I guess we'll have to let the Muse have that for an advertisement instead of a poem the next time, March. Well, the old gentleman given you boys your scolding?" The person of Fulkerson had got into the room long before he reached this question, and had planted itself astride a chair. Fulkerson looked over the chair back, now at March, and now at the elder Dryfoos as he spoke.

March answered him. "I guess we must have been waiting for you, Fulkerson. At any rate we hadn't got to the scolding yet."

"Why, I didn't suppose Mr. Dryfoos could 'a' held in so long. I understood he was awful mad at the way the thing started off, and wanted to give you a piece of his mind, when he got at you. I inferred as much from a remark that he made." March and

Dryfoos looked foolish, as men do when made the subject of this sort of merry misrepresentation.

"I reckon my scolding will keep awhile yet," said the old man dryly.

"Well, then, I guess it's a good chance to give Mr. Dryfoos an idea of what we've really done—just while we're resting, as Artemus Ward says. Heigh, March?"

"I will let you blow the trumpet, Fulkerson. I think it belongs strictly to the advertising department," said March. He now distinctly resented the old man's failure to say anything to him of the magazine; he made his inference that it was from a suspicion of his readiness to presume upon a recognition of his share in the success, and he was determined to second no sort of appeal for it.

"The advertising department is the heart and soul of every business," said Fulkerson hardily, "and I like to keep my hand in with a little practice on the trumpet in private. I don't believe Mr. Dryfoos has got any idea of the extent of this thing. He's been out among those Rackensackens, where we were all born, and he's read the notices in their seven by nine dailies, and he's seen the thing selling on the cars, and he thinks he appreciates what's been done. But I should just like to take him round in this little old metropolis awhile, and show him *Every Other Week* on the centre tables of the millionaires—the Vanderbilts and the Astors—and in the homes of culture and refinement everywhere, and let him judge for himself. It's the talk of the clubs

and the dinner-tables; children cry for it; it's the Castoria of literature, and the Pearline of art, the Won't-be-happy-till-he-gets-it of every enlightened man, woman, and child in this vast city. I knew we could capture the country; but, my goodness! I *didn't* expect to have New York fall into our hands at a blow. But that's just exactly what New York has done. *Every Other Week* supplies the long-felt want that's been grinding round in New York and keeping it awake nights ever since the war. It's the culmination of all the high and ennobling ideals of the past——"

"How much," asked Dryfoos, "do you expect to get out of it the first year, if it keeps the start it's got?"

"Comes right down to business, every time!" said Fulkerson, referring the characteristic to March with a delighted glance. "Well, sir, if everything works right, and we get rain enough to fill up the springs, and it isn't a grasshopper year, I expect to clear above all expenses something in the neighbourhood of twenty-five thousand dollars."

"Humph! And you are all going to work a year—editor, manager, publisher, artists, writers, printers, and the rest of 'em—to clear twenty-five thousand dollars?—I made that much in half a day in Moffitt once. I see it made in half a minute in Wall Street, sometimes." The old man presented this aspect of the case with a good-natured contempt, which included Fulkerson and his enthusiasm in an obvious liking.

His son suggested, "But when we make that money here, no one loses it."

"Can you prove that?" His father turned sharply upon him. "Whatever is won is lost. It's all a game; it don't make any difference what you bet on. Business is business, and a business man takes his risks with his eyes open."

"Ah, but the glory!" Fulkerson insinuated with impudent persiflage. "I hadn't got to the glory yet, because it's hard to estimate it; but put the glory at the lowest figure, Mr. Dryfoos, and add it to the twenty-five thousand, and you've got an annual income from *Every Other Week* of dollars enough to construct a silver railroad, double-track, from this office to the moon. I don't mention any of the sister planets because I like to keep within bounds."

Dryfoos showed his lower teeth for pleasure in Fulkerson's fooling, and said, "That's what I like about you, Mr. Fulkerson: you always keep within bounds."

"Well, I *ain't* a shrinking Boston violet, like March here. More sunflower in my style of diffidence; but I am modest, I don't deny it," said Fulkerson. "And I do hate to have a thing overstated."

"And the glory—you do really think there's something in the glory that pays?"

"Not a doubt of it! I shouldn't care for the paltry return in money," said Fulkerson, with a burlesque of generous disdain, "if it wasn't for the glory along with it."

"And how should you feel about the glory, if there was no money along with it?"

"Well, sir, I'm happy to say we haven't come to that yet."

"Now, Conrad, here," said the old man, with a sort of pathetic rancour, "would rather have the glory alone. I believe he don't even care much for your kind of glory, either, Mr. Fulkerson."

Fulkerson ran his little eyes curiously over Conrad's face and then March's, as if searching for a trace there of something gone before which would enable him to reach Dryfoos's whole meaning. He apparently resolved to launch himself upon conjecture. "Oh, well, we know how Conrad feels about the things of this world, anyway. I should like to take 'em on the plane of another sphere, too, sometimes; but I noticed a good while ago that this was the world I was born into, and so I made up my mind that I would do pretty much what I saw the rest of the folks doing here below. And I can't see but what Conrad runs the thing on business principles in his department, and I guess you'll find it so if you look into it. I consider that we're a whole team and big dog under the wagon with you to draw on for supplies, and March, here, at the head of the literary business, and Conrad in the counting-room, and me to do the heavy lying in the advertising part. Oh, and Beaton, of course, in the art. I'most forgot Beaton—*Hamlet* with Hamlet left out."

Dryfoos looked across at his son. "Wasn't that the fellow's name that was there last night?"

"Yes," said Conrad.

The old man rose. "Well, I reckon I got to be going. You ready to go up-town, Conrad?"

"Well, not quite yet, father."

The old man shook hands with March, and went downstairs, followed by his son.

Fulkerson remained.

"He didn't jump at the chance you gave him to compliment us all round, Fulkerson," said March, with a smile not wholly of pleasure.

Fulkerson asked with as little joy, in the grin he had on, "Didn't he say anything to you before I came in?"

"Not a word."

"Dogged if *I* know what to make of it," sighed Fulkerson, "but I guess he's been having a talk with Conrad that's soured on him. I reckon may be he came back expecting to find that boy reconciled to the glory of this world, and Conrad's showed himself just as set against it as ever."

"It might have been that," March admitted pensively. "I fancied something of the kind myself from words the old man let drop."

Fulkerson made him explain, and then he said, "That's it, then; and it's all right. Conrad'll come round in time; and all we've got to do is to have patience with the old man till he does. I know he likes *you*." Fulkerson affirmed this only interrogatively, and looked so anxiously to March for corroboration that March laughed.

"He dissembled his love," he said; but afterward

in describing to his wife his interview with Mr. Dryfoos he was less amused with this fact.

When she saw that he was a little cast down by it, she began to encourage him. "He's just a common, ignorant man, and probably didn't know how to express himself. You may be perfectly sure that he's delighted with the success of the magazine, and that he understands as well as you do that he owes it all to you."

"Ah, I'm *not* so sure. I don't believe a man's any better for having made money so easily and rapidly as Dryfoos has done, and I doubt if he's any wiser. I don't know just the point he's reached in his evolution from grub to beetle, but I do know that so far as it's gone the process must have involved a bewildering change of ideals and criterions. I guess he's come to despise a great many things that he once respected, and that intellectual ability is among them—what *we* call intellectual ability. He must have undergone a moral deterioration, an atrophy of the generous instincts, and I don't see why it shouldn't have reached his mental make-up. He has sharpened, but he has narrowed ; his sagacity has turned into suspicion, his caution to meanness, his courage to ferocity. That's the way I philosophise a man of Dryfoos's experience, and I am not very proud when I realise that such a man and his experience are the ideal and ambition of most Americans. I rather think they came pretty near being mine, once."

"No, dear, they never did," his wife protested.

"Well, they're not likely to be, in the future. The Dryfoos feature of *Every Other Week* is thoroughly distasteful to me."

"Why, but he hasn't really got anything to do with it, has he, beyond furnishing the money?"

"That's the impression that Fulkerson has allowed us to get. But the man that holds the purse holds the reins. He may let us guide the horse, but when he likes he can drive. If we don't like his driving, then we can get down."

Mrs. March was less interested in this figure of speech than in the personal aspects involved. "Then you think Mr. Fulkerson has deceived you?"

"Oh no!" said her husband, laughing. "But I think he has deceived himself, perhaps."

"How?" she pursued.

"He may have thought he was using Dryfoos, when Dryfoos was using him, and he may have supposed he was not afraid of him when he was very much so. His courage hadn't been put to the test, and courage is a matter of proof, like proficiency on the fiddle, you know: you can't tell whether you've got it till you try."

"Nonsense! Do you mean that he would ever sacrifice *you* to Mr. Dryfoos?"

"I hope he may not be tempted. But I'd rather be taking the chances with Fulkerson alone, than with Fulkerson and Dryfoos to back him. Dryfoos seems somehow to take the poetry and the pleasure out of the thing."

Mrs. March was a long time silent. Then she

began, "Well, my dear, *I* never wanted to come to New York——"

"Neither did I," March promptly put in.

"But now that we're here," she went on, "I'm not going to have you letting every little thing discourage you. I don't see what there was in Mr. Dryfoos's manner to give you any anxiety. He's just a common, stupid, inarticulate country person, and he didn't know how to express himself, as I said in the beginning, and that's the reason he didn't say anything."

"Well, I don't deny you're right about it."

"It's dreadful," his wife continued, "to be mixed up with such a man and his family, but I don't believe he'll ever meddle with your management, and till he does, all you need do is to have as little to do with him as possible, and go quietly on your own way."

"Oh, I shall go on quietly enough," said March. "I hope I shan't begin going stealthily."

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. March, "just let me know when you're tempted to do that. If ever you sacrifice the smallest grain of your honesty or your self-respect to Mr. Dryfoos, or anybody else, I will simply renounce you."

"In view of that I'm rather glad the management of *Every Other Week* involves tastes and not convictions" said March.

### III.

THAT night Dryfoos was wakened from his after-dinner nap by the sound of gay talk and nervous giggling in the drawing-room. The talk, which was Christine's, and the giggling, which was Mela's, were intershot with the heavier tones of a man's voice; and Dryfoos lay awhile on the leathern lounge in his library, trying to make out whether he knew the voice. His wife sat in a deep chair before the fire, with her eyes on his face, waiting for him to wake.

"Who is that out there?" he asked, without opening his eyes.

"Indeed, indeed I don't know, Jacob," his wife answered. "I reckon it's just some visitor of the girls."

"Was I snoring?"

"Not a bit. You was sleeping as quiet! I did hate to have 'em wake you, and I was just goin' out to shoo them. They've been playin' something, and that made them laugh."

"I didn't know but I had snored," said the old man, sitting up.

"No," said his wife. Then she asked wistfully, "Was you out at the old place, Jacob?"

"Yes."

"Did it look natural?"

"Yes; mostly. They're sinking the wells down in the woods pasture."

"And—the children's graves?"

"They haven't touched that part. But I reckon we got to have 'em moved to the cemetery. I bought a lot."

The old woman began softly to weep. "It does seem too hard that they can't be let to rest in peace, pore little things. I wanted you and me to lay there too, when our time come, Jacob. Just there, back o' the beehives, and under them shoomakes—my, I can see the very place! And I don't believe I'll ever feel at home anywheres else. I woon't know where I am when the trumpet sounds. I have to think before I can tell where the east is in New York; and what if I should git faced the wrong way when I raise? Jacob, I wonder you could sell it!" Her head shook, and the fire-light shone on her tears, as she searched the folds of her dress for her pocket.

A peal of laughter came from the drawing-room, and then the sound of chords struck on the piano.

"Hush! Don't you cry 'Liz'beth!" said Dryfoos. "Here; take my handkerchief. I've got a nice lot in the cemetery, and I'm goin' to have a monument, with two lambs on it—like the one you always liked so much. It ain't the fashion, any more, to have family buryin'-grounds; they're collectin' 'em into the cemeteries, all round."

"I reckon I got to bear it," said his wife, muffling her face in his handkerchief. "And I suppose the Lord kin find me, wherever I am. But I always did want to lay just there. You mind how we used to go out and set there, after milkin', and watch the sun go down, and talk about where their angels was, and try to figger it out?"

"I remember, 'Liz'beth."

The man's voice in the drawing-room sang a snatch of French song, insolent, mocking, salient; and then Christine's attempted the same strain, and another cry of laughter from Mela followed.

"Well, I always did expect to lay there. But I reckon it's all right. It won't be a great while, now, any way. Jacob, I don't believe I'm agoin' to live very long. I know it don't agree with me here."

"Oh, I guess it does, 'Liz'beth. You're just a little pulled down with the weather. It's coming spring, and you feel it; but the doctor says you're all right. I stopped in, on the way up; and he says so."

"I reckon he don't know everything," the old woman persisted. "I've been runnin' down ever since we left Moffitt, and I didn't feel any too well there, even. It's a very strange thing, Jacob, that the richer you git, the less you ain't able to stay where you want to, dead or alive."

"It's for the children we do it," said Dryfoos. "We got to give them their chance in the world."

"Oh, the world! They ought to bear the yoke

in their youth, like we done. I know it's what Coonrod would like to do."

Dryfoos got upon his feet. "If Coonrod 'll mind his own business, and do what I want him to, he'll have yoke enough to bear." He moved from his wife, without further effort to comfort her, and pattered heavily out into the dining-room. Beyond its obscurity stretched the glitter of the deep drawing-room. His feet, in their broad, flat slippers, made no sound on the dense carpet, and he came unseen upon the little group there near the piano. Mela perched upon the stool with her back to the keys, and Beaton bent over Christine, who sat with a banjo in her lap, letting him take her hands and put them in the right place on the instrument. Her face was radiant with happiness, and Mela was watching her with foolish, unselfish pleasure in her bliss.

There was nothing wrong in the affair to a man of Dryfoos's traditions and perceptions, and if it had been at home in the farm sitting-room, or even in his parlour at Moffitt, he would not have minded a young man's placing his daughter's hands on a banjo, or even holding them there; it would have seemed a proper attention from him if he was courting her. But here, in such a house as this, with the daughter of a man who had made as much money as he had, he did not know but it was a liberty. He felt the angry doubt of it which beset him in regard to so many experiences of his changed life; he wanted to show his sense of it, if it was a liberty, but he did

not know how, and he did not know that it was so. Besides, he could not help a touch of the pleasure in Christine's happiness which Mela showed; and he would have gone back to the library, if he could, without being discovered.

But Beaton had seen him, and Dryfoos, with a nonchalant nod to the young man, came forward. "What you got there, Christine?"

"A banjo," said the girl, blushing in her father's presence.

Mela gurgled. "Mr. Beaton is learnun' her the first position."

Beaton was not embarrassed. He was in evening dress, and his face, pointed with its brown beard, showed extremely handsome above the expanse of his broad white shirt-front. He gave back as nonchalant a nod as he had got, and without further greeting to Dryfoos, he said to Christine, "No, no. You must keep your hand and arm so." He held them in position. "There! Now strike with your right hand. See?"

"I don't believe I can ever learn," said the girl, with a fond upward look at him.

"Oh yes, you can," said Beaton.

They both ignored Dryfoos in the little play of protests which followed, and he said, half jocosely, half suspiciously, "And is the banjo the fashion, now?" He remembered it as the emblem of low-down show business, and associated it with end-men, and blackened faces, and grotesque shirt collars.

"It's all the rage," Mela shouted in answer for all.

"Everybody plays it. Mr. Beaton borrowed this from a lady friend of his."

"Humph! Pity I got you a piano, then," said Dryfoos. "A banjo would have been cheaper."

Beaton so far admitted him to the conversation as to seem reminded of the piano by his mentioning it. He said to Mela, "Oh, won't you just strike those chords?" and as Mela wheeled about and beat the keys, he took the banjo from Christine and sat down with it. "This way!" He strummed it, and murmured the tune Dryfoos had heard him singing from the library, while he kept his beautiful eyes floating on Christine's. "You try that, now; it's very simple."

"Where is Mrs. Mandel?" Dryfoos demanded, trying to assert himself.

Neither of the girls seemed to have heard him at first in the chatter they broke into over what Beaton proposed. Then Mela said absently, "Oh, she had to go out to see one of her friends that's sick," and she struck the piano keys. "Come; try it, Chris!"

Dryfoos turned about unheeded, and went back to the library. He would have liked to put Beaton out of his house, and in his heart he burned against him as a contumacious hand; he would have liked to discharge him from the art department of *Every Other Week* at once. But he was aware of not having treated Beaton with much ceremony, and if the young man had returned his behaviour in kind, with an electrical response to his own feeling, had he any

right to complain? After all, there was no harm in his teaching Christine the banjo.

His wife still sat looking into the fire. "I can't see," she said, "as we've got a bit more comfort of our lives, Jacob, because we've got such piles and piles of money. I wisht to gracious we was back on the farm this minute. I wisht you had held out ag'inst the childern about sellin' it; 'twould 'a' bin the best thing fur 'em, I say. I believe in my soul they'll git spoiled here in New York. I kin see a change in 'em a'ready—in the girls."

Dryfoos stretched himself on the lounge again. "I can't see as Coonrod is much comfort, either. Why ain't he here with his sisters? What does all that work of his on the East side amount to? It seems as if he done it to cross me, as much as anything." Dryfoos complained to his wife on the basis of mere affectional habit, which in married life often survives the sense of intellectual equality. He did not expect her to reason with him, but there was help in her listening, and though she could only soothe his fretfulness with soft answers which were often wide of the purpose, he still went to her for solace. "Here, I've gone into this newspaper business, or whatever it is, on his account, and he don't seem any more satisfied than ever. I can see he hain't got his heart in it."

"The pore boy tries; I know he does, Jacob; and he wants to please you. But he give up a good deal when he give up bein' a preacher; I s'pose we ought remember that."

"A preacher!" sneered Dryfoos. "I reckon bein' a preacher wouldn't satisfy him now. He had the impudence to tell me this afternoon that he would like to be a *priest*; and he threw it up to me that he never could be, because I'd kept him from studyin'."

"He don't mean a Catholic priest—not a Roman one, Jacob," the old woman explained wistfully. "He's told me all about it. They ain't the kind o' Catholics we been used to; some sort of 'Piscopalian; and they do a heap o' good amongst the poor folks over there. He says we ain't got any idea how folks lives in them tenement-houses, hundreds of 'em in one house, and whole families in a room; and it burns in his heart to help 'em like them Fathers, as he calls 'em, that gives their lives to it. He can't be a Father, he says, because he can't git the eddication, now; but he can be a Brother; and I can't find a word to say ag'inst it, when it gits to talkin', Jacob."

"I ain't saying anything against his priests, 'Liz'beth," said Dryfoos. "They're all well enough in their way; they've given up their lives to it, and it's a matter of business with them, like any other. But what I'm talking about now is Coonrod. I don't object to his doin' all the charity he wants to, and the Lord knows I've never been stingy with him about it. He might have all the money he wants, to give round any way he pleases."

"That's what I told him once, but he says money ain't the thing—or not the only thing you got to

give to them poor folks. You got to give your time, and your knowledge, and your love—I don't know what all—you got to give *yourself*, if you expect to help 'em. That's what Coonrod says."

"Well, I can tell him that charity begins at home," said Dryfoos, sitting up, in his impatience. "And he'd better give himself to *us* a little—to his old father and mother. And his sisters. What's he doin' goin' off there, to his meetings, and I don't know what all, an' leavin' them here alone?"

"Why, ain't Mr. Beaton with 'em?" asked the old woman. "I thought I heard his voice."

"Mr. Beaton! Of course, he is! And who's Mr. Beaton, anyway?"

"Why, ain't he one of the men in Coonrod's office? I thought I heard——"

"Yes, he is! But *who* is he? What's he doing round here? Is he makin' up to Christine?"

"I reckon he is. From Mely's talk, she's about crazy over the fellow. Don't you like him, Jacob?"

"I don't know him, or what he is. He hasn't got any manners. Who brought him here? How'd he come to come, in the first place?"

"Mr Fulkerson brung him, I believe," said the old woman patiently.

"Fulkerson!" Dryfoos snorted. "Where's Mrs. Mandel, I should like to know? He brought *her*, too. Does she go trapsein' off this way, every evening?"

"No, she seems to be here pretty regular most o' the time. I don't know how we could ever git along

without her, Jacob; she seems to know just what to do, and the girls would be ten times as outbreakin' without her. I hope you ain't thinkin' o' turnin' her off, Jacob?"

Dryfoos did not think it necessary to answer such a question. "It's all Fulkerson, Fulkerson, Fulkerson. It seems to me that Fulkerson about runs this family. He brought Mrs. Mandel, and he brought that Beaton, and he brought that Boston fellow! I guess I give *him* a dose, though; and I'll learn Fulkerson that he can't have everything his own way. I don't want anybody to help me spend my money. I made it, and I can manage it. I guess Mr. Fulkerson can bear a little watching, now. He's been travelling pretty free, and he's got the notion he's driving, may be. I'm agoing to look after that book a little myself."

"You'll kill yourself, Jacob," said his wife, "tryin' to do so many things. And what is it all fur? I don't see as we're better off, any, for all the money. It's just as much care as it used to be when we was all there on the farm together. I wisht we could go back, Ja——"

"We *can't* go back!" shouted the old man fiercely. "There's no farm any more to go back to. The fields is full of gas wells and oil wells and hell holes generally; the house is tore down, and the barn's goin'——"

"The *barn*!" gasped the old woman. "Oh, my!"

"If I was to give all I'm worth this minute, we couldn't go back to the farm, any more than them

girls in there could go back and be little children. I don't say we're any better off, for the money. I've got more of it now than I ever had; and there's no end to the luck; it pours in. But I feel like I was tied hand and foot. I don't know which way to move; I don't know what's best to do about anything. The money don't seem to buy anything but more and more care and trouble. We got a big house that we ain't at home in; and we got a lot of hired girls round under our feet that hinder and don't help. Our children don't mind us, and we got no friends or neighbours. But it had to be. I couldn't help but sell the farm, and we can't go back to it, for it ain't there. So don't you say anything more about it, 'Liz'beth."

"Pore Jacob!" said his wife. "Well, I woon't, dear."

#### IV.

It was clear to Beaton that Dryfoos distrusted him; and the fact heightened his pleasure in Christine's liking for him. He was as sure of this as he was of the other, though he was not so sure of any reason for his pleasure in it. She had her charm; the charm of wildness to which a certain wildness in himself responded; and there were times when his fancy contrived a common future for them, which would have a prosperity forced from the old fellow's love of the girl. Beaton liked the idea of this compulsion better than he liked the idea of the money; there was something a little repulsive in that; he imagined himself rejecting it; he almost wished he was enough in love with the girl to marry her without it; that would be fine. He was taken with her in a certain measure, in a certain way; the question was in what measure, in what way.

It was partly to escape from this question that he hurried down town, and decided to spend with the Leightons the hour remaining on his hands before it was time to go to the reception for which he was dressed. It seemed to him important that he should see Alma Leighton. After all, it was her charm that

was most abiding with him ; perhaps it was to be final. He found himself very happy in his present relations with her. She had dropped that barrier of pretences and ironical surprise. It seemed to him that they had gone back to the old ground of common artistic interest which he had found so pleasant the summer before. Apparently she and her mother had both forgiven his neglect of them in the first months of their stay in New York ; he was sure that Mrs. Leighton liked him as well as ever, and if there was still something a little provisional in Alma's manner at times, it was something that piqued more than it discouraged ; it made him curious, not anxious.

He found the young ladies with Fulkerson when he rang. He seemed to be amusing them both, and they were both amused beyond the merit of so small a pleasantry, Beaton thought, when Fulkerson said, "Introduce myself, Mr. Beaton : Mr. Fulkerson of *Every Other Week*. Think I've met you at our place." The girls laughed, and Alma explained that her mother was not very well, and would be sorry not to see him. Then she turned, as he felt, perversely, and went on talking with Fulkerson and left him to Miss Woodburn.

She finally recognised his disappointment : "Ah don't often get a chance at you, Mr. Beaton, and Ah'm just goin' to toak yo' to death. Yo' have been Soath yo'self, and yo' know ho' we *do* toak."

"I've survived to say yes," Beaton admitted.

"Oh, now, *do* you think we toak so much mo'

than you do in the No'th?" the young lady deprecated.

"I don't know. I only know you can't talk too much for me. I should like to hear you say *Soath* and *hoase* and *aboat* for the rest of my life."

"That's what Ah call raght personal, Mr. Beaton. Now Ah'm goin' to be personal, too." Miss Woodburn flung out over her lap the square of cloth she was embroidering, and asked him, "Don't you think that's beautiful? Now, as an awtust—a *great* awtust?"

"As a *great* awtust, yes," said Beaton, mimicking her accent. "If I were less than great I might have something to say about the arrangement of colours. You're as bold and original as Nature."

"Really? Oh, now, do tell me yo' favo'ite colo', Mr. Beaton."

"My favourite colour? Bless my soul, why should I prefer any? Is blue good, or red wicked? Do people have favourite colours?" Beaton found himself suddenly interested.

"Of co'se they do," answered the girl. "Don't awtusts?"

"I never heard of one that had—consciously."

"Is it possible? I supposed they all had. Now *mah* favo'ite colo' is gawnet. Don't you think it's a pretty colo'?"

"It depends upon how it's used. Do you mean in neckties?" Beaton stole a glance at the one Fulkerson was wearing.

Miss Woodburn laughed with her face bowed upon

her wrist. "Ah do think you gentlemen in the No'th awe ten tahms as lahvely as the ladies."

"Strange," said Beaton. "In the South—Soath, excuse me!—I made the observation that the ladies were ten times as lively as the gentlemen. What is that you're working?"

"This?" Miss Woodburn gave it another flirt, and looked at it with a glance of dawning recognition. "Oh, this is a table-covah. Wouldn't you lahke to see where it's to go?"

"Why, certainly."

"Well, if you'll be raght good I'll let yo' give me some professional advass about putting something in the co'ners or not, when you have seen it on the table."

She rose and led the way into the other room. Beaton knew she wanted to talk with him about something else; but he waited patiently to let her play her comedy out. She spread the cover on the table, and he advised her, as he saw she wished, against putting anything in the corners; just run a line of her stitch around the edge, he said.

"Mr. Fulkerson and Ah, why, we've been having a regular faght aboat it," she commented. "But we both agreed, fahnally, to leave it to you; Mr. Fulkerson said you'd be sure to be raght. Ah'm *so* glad you took mah sahde. But he's a great admahrer of yours, Mr. Beaton," she concluded demurely, suggestively.

"Is he? Well, I'm a great admirer of Fulkerson's," said Beaton, with a capricious willingness to

humour her wish to talk about Fulkerson. "He's a capital fellow; generous, magnanimous, with quite an ideal of friendship, and an eye single to the main chance all the time. He would advertise *Every Other Week* on his family vault."

Miss Woodburn laughed, and said she should tell him what Beaton had said.

"Do. But he's used to defamation from me, and he'll think you're joking."

"Ah suppose," said Miss Woodburn, "that he's quite the type of a New York business man." She added, as if it followed logically, "He's so different from what I thought a New York business man would be."

"It's your Virginia tradition to despise business," said Beaton rudely.

Miss Woodburn laughed again. "*Despahse* it? Mah goodness! we want to get *into* it, and 'woak it fo' all it's wo'th,' as Mr. Fulkerson says. That tradition is all past. You don't know what the Soath is now. Ah suppose mah fathaw despahses business, but he's a tradition himself, as Ah tell him." Beaton would have enjoyed joining the young lady in anything she might be going to say in derogation of her father, but he restrained himself, and she went on more and more as if she wished to account for her father's habitual hauteur with Beaton, if not to excuse it. "Ah tell him he don't understand the rising generation. He was brought up in the old school, and he thinks we're all just lahke he was when he was young, with all those

ahdeals of chivalry and family ; but mah goodness ! it's money that eyoants no'adays in the Soath, just lahke it does everywhere else. Ah suppose, if we could have slavery back in the fawn mah fathaw thinks it could have been brought up to, when the commercial spirit wouldn't let it alone, it would be the best thing ; but we can't have it back, and Ah tell him we had better have the commercial spirit, as the next best thing."

Miss Woodburn went on, with sufficient loyalty and piety, to expose the difference of her own and her father's ideals, but with what Beaton thought less reference to his own unsympathetic attention than to a knowledge finally of the *personnel* and *matériel* of *Every Other Week*, and Mr. Fulkerson's relation to the enterprise. "You *most* excuse my asking so many questions, Mr. Beaton. You know it's all mah doing that we awe heah in New York. Ah just told mah fathaw that if he was evah goin' to do anything with his wrahtings, he had got to come No'th, and Ah *made* him come. Ah believe he'd have stayed in the Soath all his lahfe. And now Mr. Fulkerson wants him to let his editor see some of his wrahtings, and Ah wanted to know something aboat the magazine. We awe a great deal excited aboat it in this hoase, you know, Mr. Beaton," she concluded, with a look that now transferred the interest from Fulkerson to Alma. She led the way back to the room where they were sitting, and went up to triumph over Fulkerson with Beaton's decision about the table-cover.

Alma was left with Beaton near the piano, and he began to talk about the Dryfooses, as he sat down on the piano stool. He said he had been giving Miss Dryfoos a lesson on the banjo ; he had borrowed the banjo of Miss Vance. Then he struck the chord he had been trying to teach Christine, and played over the air he had sung.

"How do you like that?" he asked, whirling round.

"It seems rather a disrespectful little tune, somehow," said Alma placidly.

Beaton rested his elbow on the corner of the piano, and gazed dreamily at her. "Your perceptions are wonderful. It is disrespectful. I played it, up there, because I felt disrespectful to them."

"Do you claim that as a merit?"

"No, I state it as a fact. How can you respect such people?"

"You might respect yourself, then," said the girl. "Or perhaps that wouldn't be so easy, either."

"No, it wouldn't. I like to have you say these things to me," said Beaton impartially.

"Well, I like to say them," Alma returned.

"They do me good."

"Oh, I don't know that that was my motive."

"There is no one like you—no one," said Beaton, as if apostrophising her in her absence. "To come from that house, with its assertions of money—you can hear it chink ; you can smell the foul old bank-notes ; it stifles you—into an atmosphere like this, is like coming into another world."

"Thank you," said Alma. "I'm glad there isn't that unpleasant odour here; but I wish there was a little more of the chinking."

"No, no! Don't say that!" he implored. "I like to think that there is one soul uncontaminated by the sense of money in this big, brutal, sordid city."

"You mean two," said Alma, with modesty. "But if you stifle at the Dryfooses', why do you go there?"

"Why do I go?" he mused. "Don't you believe in knowing all the natures, the types, you can? Those girls are a strange study: the young one is a simple, earthly creature, as common as an oat-field; and the other a sort of sylvan life: fierce, flashing, feline——"

Alma burst out into a laugh. "What apt alliteration! And do they like being studied? I should think the sylvan life might—scratch."

"No," said Beaton, with melancholy absence, "it only—purrs."

The girl felt a rising indignation. "Well, then, Mr. Beaton; I should hope it *would* scratch, and bite, too. I think you've no business to go about studying people, as you do. It's abominable."

"Go on," said the young man. "That Puritan conscience of yours! It appeals to the old Covenanter strain in me—like a voice of pre-existence. Go on——"

"Oh, if I went on I should merely say it was not only abominable, but contemptible."

"You could be my guardian angel, Alma," said the young man, making his eyes more and more slumbrous and dreamy.

"Stuff! I hope I have a soul *above* buttons!"

He smiled, as she rose, and followed her across the room. "Good night, Mr. Beaton," she said.

Miss Woodburn and Fulkerson came in from the other room. "What! You're not going, Beaton?"

"Yes; I'm going to a reception. I stopped in on my way."

"To kill time," Alma explained.

"Well," said Fulkerson gallantly, "this is the last place I should like to do it. But I guess I'd better be going too. It has sometimes occurred to me that there is such a thing as staying too late. But with Brother Beaton, here, just starting in for an evening's amusement, it does seem a little early yet. Can't you urge me to stay, somebody?"

The two girls laughed, and Miss Woodburn said, "Mr. Beaton is such a butterfly of fashion! Ah wish *Ah* was on mah way to a pawty. Ah feel quahite envious."

"But he didn't say it to *make* you," Alma explained with meek softness.

"Well, we can't all be swells. Where is your party, anyway, Beaton?" asked Fulkerson. "How do you manage to get your invitations to those things? I suppose a fellow has to keep hinting round pretty lively, heigh?"

Beaton took these mockeries serenely, and shook hands with Miss Woodburn, with the effect of having already shaken hands with Alma. She stood with hers clasped behind her.

## V.

BEATON went away with the smile on his face which he had kept in listening to Fulkerson, and carried it with him to the reception. He believed that Alma was vexed with him for more personal reasons than she had implied; it flattered him that she should have resented what he told her of the Dryfooses. She had scolded him in their behalf apparently; but really because he had made her jealous by his interest, of whatever kind, in some one else. What followed, had followed naturally. Unless she had been quite a simpleton she could not have met his provisional love-making on any other terms; and the reason why Beaton chiefly liked Alma Leighton was that she was not a simpleton. Even up in the country, when she was overawed by his acquaintance, at first, she was not very deeply overawed, and at times she was not overawed at all. At such times she astonished him by taking his most solemn histrionics with flippant incredulity, and even burlesquing them. But he could see, all the same, that he had caught her fancy, and he admired the skill with which she punished his neglect when they met in New York. He had really come very near

forgetting the Leightons ; the intangible obligations of mutual kindness which hold some men so fast, hung loosely upon him ; it would not have hurt him to break from them altogether ; but when he recognised them at last, he found that it strengthened them indefinitely to have Alma ignore them so completely. If she had been sentimental, or softly reproachful, that would have been the end ; he could not have stood it ; he would have had to drop her. But when she met him on his own ground, and obliged *him* to be sentimental, the game was in her hands. Beaton laughed, now, when he thought of that, and he said to himself that the girl had grown immensely since she had come to New York ; nothing seemed to have been lost upon her ; she must have kept her eyes uncommonly wide open. He noticed that especially in their talks over her work ; she had profited by everything she had seen and heard ; she had all of Wetmore's ideas pat ; it amused Beaton to see how she seized every useful word that he dropped, too, and turned him to technical account whenever she could. He liked that ; she had a great deal of talent ; there was no question of that ; if she were a man there could be no question of her future. He began to construct a future for her ; it included provision for himself too ; it was a common future, in which their lives and work were united.

He was full of the glow of its prosperity when he met Margaret Vance at the reception.

The house was one where people might chat a long time together without publicly committing

themselves to an interest in each other except such as grew out of each other's ideas. Miss Vance was there because she united in her catholic sympathies or ambitions the objects of the fashionable people and of the æsthetic people who met there on common ground. It was almost the only house in New York where this happened often, and it did not happen very often there. It was a literary house, primarily, with artistic qualifications, and the frequenters of it were mostly authors and artists; Wetmore, who was always trying to fit everything with a phrase, said it was the unfrequenters who were fashionable. There was great ease there, and simplicity; and if there was not distinction, it was not for want of distinguished people, but because there seems to be some solvent in New York life that reduces all men to a common level, that touches everybody with its potent magic and brings to the surface the deeply underlying nobody. The effect for some temperaments, for consciousness, for egotism, is admirable; for curiosity, for hero-worship, it is rather baffling. It is the spirit of the street transferred to the drawing-room; indiscriminating, levelling, but doubtless finally wholesome, and witnessing the immensity of the place, if not consenting to the grandeur of reputations or presences.

Beaton now denied that this house represented a salon at all, in the old sense; and he held that the salon was impossible, even undesirable, with us, when Miss Vance sighed for it. At any rate, he said that this turmoil of coming and going, this

bubble and babble, this cackling and hissing of conversation was not the expression of any such civilisation as had created the salon. Here, he owned, were the elements of intellectual delightfulness, but he said their assemblage in such quantity alone denied the salon; there was too much of a good thing. The French word implied a long evening of general talk among the guests, crowned with a little chicken at supper, ending at cock-crow. Here was tea, with milk or with lemon—baths of it—and claret cup for the hardier spirits throughout the evening. It was very nice, very pleasant, but it was not the little chicken—not the salon. In fact, he affirmed, the salon descended from above, out of the great world, and included the æsthetic world in it. But our great world—the rich people, were stupid, with no wish to be otherwise; they were not even curious about authors and artists. Beaton fancied himself speaking impartially, and so he allowed himself to speak bitterly; he said that in no other city in the world, except Vienna, perhaps, were such people so little a part of society.

“It isn’t altogether the rich people’s fault,” said Margaret; and she spoke impartially, too. “I don’t believe that the literary men and the artists would like a salon that descended to them. Madame Geoffrin, you know, was very plebeian; her husband was a business man of some sort.”

“He would have been a howling swell in New York,” said Beaton, still impartially.

Wetmore came up to their corner, with a scroll

of bread and butter in one hand and a cup of tea in the other. Large and fat, and clean shaven, he looked like a monk in evening dress.

"We were talking about salons," said Margaret.

"Why don't you open a saloon yourself?" asked Wetmore, breathing thickly from the anxiety of getting through the crowd without spilling his tea.

"Like poor Lady Barberina Lemon?" said the girl, with a laugh. "What a good story! That idea of a woman who couldn't be interested in any of the arts because she was socially and traditionally the material of them! We can never reach that height of nonchalance in this country."

"Not if we tried seriously?" suggested the painter. "I've an idea that if the Americans ever gave their minds to that sort of thing, they could take the palm—or the cake, as Beaton here would say—just as they do in everything else. When we do have an aristocracy, it will be an aristocracy that will go ahead of anything the world has ever seen. Why don't somebody make a beginning, and go in openly for an ancestry, and a lower middle class, and an hereditary legislature, and all the rest? We've got liveries, and crests, and palaces, and caste feeling. We're all right as far as we've gone, and we've got the money to go any length."

"Like your natural-gas man, Mr. Beaton," said the girl, with a smiling glance round at him.

"Ah!" said Wetmore, stirring his tea, "has Beaton got a natural-gas man?"

"My natural-gas man," said Beaton, ignoring

Wetmore's question, "doesn't know how to live in his palace yet, and I doubt if he has any caste feeling. I fancy his family believe themselves victims of it. They say—one of the young ladies does—that she never saw such an unsociable place as New York; nobody calls."

"That's good!" said Wetmore. "I suppose they're all ready for company too: good cook, furniture, servants, carriages?"

"Galore," said Beaton.

"Well, that's too bad. There's a chance for you, Miss Vance. Doesn't your philanthropy embrace the socially destitute as well as the financially? Just think of a family like that, without a friend, in a great city! I should think common charity had a duty there—not to mention the uncommon."

He distinguished that kind as Margaret's by a glance of ironical deference. She had a repute for good works which was out of proportion to the works, as it always is, but she was really active in that way, under the vague obligation, which we now all feel, to be helpful. She was of the church which seems to have found a reversion to the imposing ritual of the past the way back to the early ideals of Christian brotherhood.

"Oh, they seem to have Mr. Beaton," Margaret answered, and Beaton felt obscurely flattered by her reference to his patronage of the Dryfooses.

He explained to Wetmore, "They have me because they partly own me. Dryfoos is Fulkerson's financial backer in *Every Other Week*."

"Is that so? Well, that's interesting too. Aren't you rather astonished, Miss Vance, to see what a pretty thing Beaton is making of that magazine of his?"

"Oh," said Margaret, "it's so very nice, every way; it makes you feel as if you *did* have a country, after all. It's as *chic*—that detestable little word!—as those new French books."

"Beaton modelled it on them. But you mustn't suppose he does everything about *Every Other Week*; he'd like you to. Beaton, you haven't come up to that cover of your first number, since. That was the design of one of my pupils, Miss Vance—a little girl that Beaton discovered down in New Hampshire last summer."

"Oh yes. And have you great hopes of her, Mr. Wetmore?"

"She seems to have more love of it and knack for it than any one of her sex I've seen yet. It really looks like a case of art for art's sake, at times. But you can't tell. They're liable to get married at any moment, you know. Look here, Beaton, when your natural-gas man gets to the picture-buying stage in his development, just remember your old friends, will you? You know, Miss Vance, those new fellows have their regular stages. They never know what to do with their money, but they find out that people buy pictures, at one point. They shut your things up in their houses where nobody comes; and after a while they overeat themselves—they don't know what else to do—and die of apoplexy, and

leave your pictures to a gallery, and then they see the light. It's slow, but it's pretty sure. Well, I see Beaton isn't going to move on, as he ought to do ; and so *I* must. He always *was* an unconventional creature."

Wetmore went away, but Beaton remained, and he outstayed several other people who came up to speak to Miss Vance. She was interested in everybody, and she liked the talk of these clever literary, artistic, clerical, even theatrical people, and she liked the sort of court with which they recognised her fashion as well as her cleverness ; it was very pleasant to be treated intellectually as if she were one of themselves, and socially as if she was not habitually the same, but a sort of guest in Bohemia, a distinguished stranger. If it was Arcadia rather than Bohemia, still she felt her quality of distinguished stranger. The flattery of it touched her fancy, and not her vanity ; she had very little vanity. Beaton's devotion made the same sort of appeal ; it was not so much that she liked him as she liked being the object of his admiration. She was a girl of genuine sympathies, intellectual rather than sentimental. In fact she was an intellectual person, whom qualities of the heart saved from being disagreeable, as they saved her on the other hand from being worldly or cruel in her fashionableness. She had read a great many books, and had ideas about them, quite courageous and original ideas ; she knew about pictures—she had been in Wetmore's class ; she was fond of music ; she was willing to under-

stand even politics; in Boston she might have been agnostic, but in New York she was sincerely religious; she was very accomplished, and perhaps it was her goodness that prevented her feeling what was not best in Beaton.

"Do you think," she said, after the retreat of one of the comers and goers left her alone with him again, "that those young ladies would like me to call on them?"

"Those young ladies?" Beaton echoed. "Miss Leighton and——"

"No; I have been there with my aunt's cards already."

"Oh yes," said Beaton, as if he had known of it; he admired the pluck and pride with which Alma had refrained from ever mentioning the fact to him, and had kept her mother from mentioning it, which must have been difficult.

"I mean the Miss Dryfooses. It seems really barbarous, if nobody goes near them. We do all kinds of things, and help all kinds of people in some ways, but we let strangers remain strangers unless they know how to make their way among us."

"The Dryfooses certainly wouldn't know how to make their way among you," said Beaton, with a sort of dreamy absence in his tone.

Miss Vance went on, speaking out the process of reasoning in her mind, rather than any conclusions she had reached. "We defend ourselves by trying to believe that they must have friends of their own, or that they would think us patronising, and

wouldn't like being made the objects of social charity ; but they needn't really suppose anything of the kind."

"I don't imagine they would," said Beaton. "I think they'd be only too happy to have you come. But you wouldn't know what to do with each other, indeed, Miss Vance."

"Perhaps we shall like each other," said the girl bravely, "and then we shall know. What church are they of?"

"I don't believe they're of any," said Beaton. "The mother was brought up a Dunkard."

"A Dunkard?"

Beaton told what he knew of the primitive sect, with its early Christian polity, its literal interpretation of Christ's ethics, and its quaint ceremonial of foot-washing ; he made something picturesque of that. "The father is a Mammon-worshipper, pure and simple. I suppose the young ladies go to church, but I don't know where. They haven't tried to convert me."

"I'll tell them not to despair—after I've converted *them*," said Miss Vance. "Will you let me use you as a *point d'appui*, Mr. Beaton?"

"Any way you like. If you're really going to see them, perhaps I'd better make a confession. I left your banjo with them, after I got it put in order."

"How very nice ! Then we have a common interest already."

"Do you mean the banjo, or —— ?"

"The banjo, decidedly. Which of them plays ?"

"Neither. But the eldest heard that the banjo was 'all the rage,' as the youngest says. Perhaps you can persuade them that good works are the rage too."

Beaton had no very lively belief that Margaret would go to see the Dryfooses; he did so few of the things he proposed that he went upon the theory that others must be as faithless. Still, he had a cruel amusement in figuring the possible encounter between Margaret Vance, with her intellectual elegance, her eager sympathies and generous ideals, and those girls with their rude past, their false and distorted perspective, their sordid and hungry selfishness, and their faith in the omnipotence of their father's wealth wounded by their experience of its present social impotence. At the bottom of his heart he sympathised with them rather than with her; he was more like them.

People had ceased coming, and some of them were going. Miss Vance said she must go too, and she was about to rise, when the host came up with March; Beaton turned away.

"Miss Vance, I want to introduce Mr. March, the editor of *Every Other Week*. You oughtn't to be restricted to the art department. We literary fellows think that arm of the service gets too much of the glory nowadays." His banter was for Beaton, but he was already beyond ear-shot, and the host went on: "Mr. March can talk with you about your favourite Boston. He's just turned his back on it."

"Oh, I hope not!" said Miss Vance. "I can't imagine anybody voluntarily leaving Boston."

"I don't say he's so bad as that," said the host, committing March to her. "He came to New York because he couldn't help it—like the rest of us. I never know whether that's a compliment to New York or not."

They talked Boston a little while, without finding that they had common acquaintance there; Miss Vance must have concluded that society was much larger in Boston than she had supposed from her visits there, or else that March did not know many people in it. But she was not a girl to care much for the inferences that might be drawn from such conclusions; she rather prided herself upon despising them; and she gave herself to the pleasure of being talked to as if she were of March's own age. In the glow of her sympathetic beauty and elegance he talked his best, and tried to amuse her with his jokes, which he had the art of tingeing with a little seriousness on one side. He made her laugh; and he flattered her by making her think; in her turn she charmed him so much by enjoying what he said that he began to brag of his wife, as a good husband always does when another woman charms him; and she asked, Oh, was Mrs. March there; and would he introduce her?

She asked Mrs. March for her address, and whether she had a day; and she said she would come to see her, if she would let her. Mrs. March could not be so enthusiastic about her as March was, but as they walked home together they talked the girl over, and agreed about her beauty and

her amiability. Mrs. March said she seemed very unspoiled for a person who must have been so much spoiled. They tried to analyse her charm, and they succeeded in formulating it as a combination of intellectual fashionableness and worldly innocence. "I think," said Mrs. March, "that city girls, brought up as she must have been, are often the most innocent of all. They never imagine the wickedness of the world, and if they marry happily they go through life as innocent as children. Everything combines to keep them so; the very hollowness of society shields them. They are the loveliest of the human race. But perhaps the rest have to pay too much for them."

"For such an exquisite creature as Miss Vance," said March, "we couldn't pay too much."

A wild laughing cry suddenly broke upon the air at the street-crossing in front of them. A girl's voice called out, "Run, run, Jen! The copper is after you." A woman's figure rushed stumbling across the way and into the shadow of the houses, pursued by a burly policeman.

"Ah, but if *that's* part of the price?"

They went along fallen from the gay spirit of their talk into a silence which he broke with a sigh. "Can that poor wretch and the radiant girl we left yonder really belong to the same system of things? How impossible each makes the other seem!"







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